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ABSTRACT

In early childhood education, there is a growing trend towards greater involvement of parents as educators, as paid and volunteer staff, as decision makers, and as resources. The purpose of this paper is to consider the origins of the trend towards parent involvement, to describe its various forms, and to present some policy implications. Parent components of various Head Start and Follow Through programs and research implications for different models of parent involvement are discussed. Topics focus on parental role in early childhood education, barriers and incentives to parent participation, and costs of different forms of parent involvement. An extensive bibliography is included. (ST)

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE UNITED STATES

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1.0 Scope of the paper: Three issues have been identified as central to the present debate on early childhood education (ECE). These are: (i) the transition between kindergarten and primary school (how early should formal education begin); (ii) the increasing demand for kindergarten for young children; and (iii) the trend towards the involvement of parents, the family-at-large, and the neighborhood.[1] This paper addresses only the issue of parent involvement in ECE.

Many forms of parent involvement in ECE are found in the United States. The trend towards all of these is increasing, although some (e.g., bringing the school into the home) are being adopted more rapidly than others. The purpose of this paper is to consider the origins of the trend, to describe various forms of parent involvement, and to present some policy implications.

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(October 1973: V-6)

2.0 Views on ECE: Before discussing parent involvement, it is important to point out that in the United States opinion is divided on the value of early childhood education.[2] By early childhood education is meant the learning through formal or informal instruction that takes place between the ages of 0 to 6.[3] For educational planners, there are two issues: how early should compulsory education through formal schooling begin, and public responsibility for early childhood education before the child enters school.

There is a long history of ECE programs intended to acculturate immigrant children and their parents, and to meet other special situations. The largest of these, in response to the need for women's labor during World War II was the Lanham Act, which provided day care for thousands of preschool children. After 1945, Lanham funds were no longer available, men returned from the war needing jobs previously held by women, and, except in California, most of the Lanham Act supported day care centers closed, never to re-open. A sustained, universially available early childhood education program for children from 0 to 6 has not been provided in the U.S. at any time.

With regard to age of entry into public school, about two out of three five year olds are enrolled in public kindergartens. In Northern, Central and Western states, almost 95% of all five year olds are enrolled in school. In Southern states, public kindergartens are rarer, and only 33% of all five year olds attend school.[4] Kindergarten enrollment is increasing, however, and it is likely that kindergarten will be universally available in the 1980s.

There is no trend toward decreasing the age of school entry to 4 years, although about one third of all children from 3 to 5 attend some form of ECE and one state, California, does have optional public ECE programs for about 10% of its four year olds. Few school administrators or policy makers now recommend expansion of public school programs to compulsory education for four year olds as a desirable reallocation of existing state and local education funds.

The policy issue of public responsibility for education before school entry is unresolved. "Education" traditionally has begun when children enter school. Many people see no reason to change. In their view, education is the responsibility of parents until school entry, and preschools, educational television, or home visitors have no business intruding on families.

Still another group objects to public investment in ECE on research grounds. Studies of many ECE programs show immediate gains in socialization, language and cognitive skills. There is, however, little evidence of durable, substantial benefits for children after the enter school.[5] Some researchers are re-emphasizing the innate nature of development, and do not believe ECE is necessary even in environmentally dismal circumstances. Others fear that beginning formal education too early may harm the child, or deprive the child of the years of play before parental demands for achievement become intense.

Deciding not to invest public funds in ECE raises issues of equity and absolute levels in access to child care services. There have long been, and continue to be, informal systems of support for child-rearing and early childhood education through voluntary organizations, parent self-help and the private sector. These are, however, mostly available to the middle class. Parents who can afford them often chose the more expensive early childhood education programs over custodial services if day care is needed. Even where mothers are not working, many affluent parents send their children to play groups and nursery schools for educational and socialization benefits, and, perhaps, for a few hours relief from the heavy demands of child care. Many more children of middle class parents than of lower income parents are enrolled in ECE programs at every age level, and have been for the past decade. There are some publicly supported programs with ECE components for low-income families, such as the Federal Government's Project Head Start, but these serve only 12% of the income-eligible children between 3 and 6 years of age. Publicly supported ECE programs for children from 0 to 3 serve only about 1% of the income eligible population. Without public support of ECE, the middle class is in effect regarding early education as a luxury which the rich are not obligated to share with the poor.

The poor also have little access to developmental day care. An appalling number of children from 0 to 6 are "cared for" in unsafe, dirty rooms with inadequate food and health care, little adult attention, a few broken toys and the television set for amusement.[6] There are guidelines prohibiting such abuses for where Federal funds are involved,[7] but enforcement is weak or non-existent. Also, only about 10% of all children whose mothers work are in day care facilities which receive some Federal support, and thus are even nominally protected by the guidelines.

Failure to provide some form of ECE seems inconsistent with a national commitment in principle to improving the quality of life from children from 0 to 6 and with the often repeated public endorsement of the importance of the early childhood period. But then, there is some evidence that as a nation the United States is not concerned about young children and does not value their education. Recent failures to enact to enact legislation providing children's services, tolerance of a shockingly high infant mortality rate among children of certain minorities and the poor, lack of action to reduce repeatedly documented subclinical malnutrition and chronic hunger for young children, and neglect of the welfare of millions of children who are in unlicensed day care (or left alone without care of any kind) seem to belie the high-sounding statements.

There is, to be fair, other evidence that public concern for the first five years of life and for ECE is growing. In the past two years, many of the states have established Office of Early Childhood Development. These Offices are charged with identifying children's needs, coordinating services for children which already exist in various state bureaus, and proposing new programs to improve the quality of life for children in the state. Membership in national organizations concerned with ECE has grown in the last decade. Training institutions and programs for upgrading the quality of child care workers have developed equally rapidly. Sesame Street, an educationally oriented television program for 3 to 5 year-olds, is popular. Citizens groups and professional organizations continue to press for programs on behalf of children, including early childhood education.

There are many reports arguing the pros and cons of public investment in ECE and children's programs.[8] The conclusions which appear most frequently are:

(i) with the increase in single-parent families and working mothers, expansion of day care services is necessary.

(ii) these services should include group care, family day care, and home day care. There should be public standards set, and enforced, for day care quality. Public investment in developmental day care (day care with a strong educational component) is not justified, however, since there is little evidence that the effects of the educational component are large and durable, and such programs are costly.[9]

(iii) some children, such as handicapped youngsters at special risk, need preschool programs which are educational in nature. These children should be identified and provided with such care.

(iv) other children need comprehensive services. Again, the services should be provided on a diagnostic, prescriptive basis to children known to need them.[10]

(v) there is little evidence of substantial or durable benefits from extending the age of entry into formal education to 3 and 4 year olds.

(vi) parent education is recommended. Such programs are to begin as early as possible to strengthen the family's ability as child rearing agents, and might be available in conjunction with other forms of ECE or support for the child.[11]

3.0 Types of parent involvement in ECE: This summary of conclusions has mentioned only one type of parent involvement in ECE: parents as recipients of training in child rearing. There are many forms which such education for parenthood has taken, and these will be discussed in section 5.0. Parent education is, however, only one variety of parent involvement in ECE. Others considered are parents as paid staff members, parents as decision-makers in ECE programs, and parents as resources in the educational process from whom teachers can learn. In this section (3.0), a taxonomy of the major forms and their sub-categories is presented. The taxonomy is derived from Stearns and Peterson, and from Yin et. al.[12]

> (i) "Parents as tutors of their own children: In this kind of participation, parents, generally mothers, are given skills to aid in the development of their own children. For example, they may attend group sesions in which they discuss child-rearing practices with a child development specialist in order to teach their young children skills and/or attitudes which will help them in school. In another form of this role, low income mothers are visited in their own homes by professionals or by community liaison workers who instruct the mothers in various aspects of tutoring and child care. Some parent education programs have quite specific skills to recommend, and mothers learn to employ special toys or to use materials found around the house in new ways. Others concentrate on general principles of learning and discipline such as the importance of conversation, environmental stimulation and positive reinforcement. Many of the skills these parents are taught to employ are those which have been found to distinguish middle-class from lower-class mothers."

> (ii) "Parents as paid employees: The most widespread use of parents as employees has been in the classroom where they work under the supervision of teachers. The classroom aide, sometimes called assistants or paraprofessionals, may perform any of a wide variety of duties depending on the goals of the particular project and the attitude of the individual teachers. At one end of the spectrum, an aide may be restricted to stricly non-instructional tasks, e.g., taking the roll, thus freeing the teacher from these time-consuming chores. At a somewhat higher level, an aide may work with individual children or small groups, reviewing concepts they have already learned in spelling, reading, or arithmetic. In rare instances, aides with

> considerable experience or training may be given the responsibility of teaching new skills and concepts, sometimes in conjunction with and sometimes in the absence of the teachers.
>
> Parents have also been employed outside the classroom as community workers or school/home coordinators. A parent in this type of role generally functions as a liaison between the program or school professional staff and those parents who are reluctant or unable to interact with the professional staff directly. They generally work to make parents more active, encouraging them to visit their children's classrooms, attend meetings or just get together socially. Sometimes these paid parents are intended to facilitate communication on both directions, providing information and assistance to parents and in turn providing feedback from them to the professional staff."
>
> (iii) "Parents as advisors and decision makers: Programs attempting to promote parent involvement in educational decision-making as a strategy for improving the performance of children, particularly low income children, are relatively new. They run the gamut from programs which seek to make schools generally 'responsive' to parents while not necessarily relinquishing their power to them (for example, those which inform them of decisions after making them), those, like Follow Through, which have parent advisory committees, to schools which are actually controlled by parents and the communities. A somewhat different focus might be on the effects of alternative schools in which parents exercise functional control by their choice of a school which meets their needs." (Stearns and Peterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-6).

In discussing parents as advisors and as decision makers, Stearns and Peterson adopt a typology derived from Arnstein which includes five roles:

> "(i) The Placation role: school officials and school boards allow community persons and parents to make whatever minimum decision are necessary to keep the noise down."

> "(ii) The Sanctions role: The purpose is to find visible persons acceptable to the widest community who will give sanctions to already established or newly developed programs and policies. The choice is left to school officials who select participants to service various predetermine ends, mostly gaining public acceptance of goals established by school officials."

> "(iii) The Information role: Here groups of persons who have information school officials need, or have been directed to obtain, are brought together under considerable control (in selection of participants, agenda, reporting of findings) by the officials involved."

> "(iv) The Checks and balances role: The purpose is to provide citizens with some inquiry, veto and checkmate powers, which involves two-way communications between citizens and officials, and citizen concurrance or approval or certain decisions."

> "(v) The Change-agent role: "Its major purpose is to set in motion a series of events that will assure that the group, as individuals and as a collective, and the substance with which they are doing will change over a period of time. Organizationally, it is a complex of all previous roles, plus community organization; the consequence is both negative power (prevention) but some forward motion." (op. cit., pp. 6-10)

Yin et al., in their comprehensive analysis of community organizations, have categorized the type of organizations exemplified by these roles into three groups.

> (i) advisory committees: "Citizens serving on these committees or attending open meetings express opinions that need not be given much weight by those delivering services. In some instances, the advisory bodies are not even empowered to represent the citizens served and act only as forums for the project staff to inform the public about plans and programs."

> (ii) committees of limited authority: "The citizens on these committees have been granted one or two significant

> but limited responsibilities. For example, they might be able to fire the project director and sign the application for federal funds, but might not have legal control over the services, staff or budget revisions once the funds are awarded."
>
> (iii) governing boards: "Board members can hire and fire the management of the project, approve the budget, set policies to guide programmatic operations, and make judgments about the quality of service delivery. These governing boards often take the form of nonprofit corporations and may have considerable legal authority."

The last role mentioned, parents as resources for teachers, is not emphasized in either Stearns and Peterson or Yin et al. It is, however, prominent in many discussions of home/school relationships in ECE. This role emphasizes professional awareness of the insight parents have into their own child's development. The information the parent can provide about the child, and about education more generally, is seen as a valued resource to be sought by teachers. Many of the sponsors in Follow Through, a national experimental program for K through 3rd grade children, emphasize the importance of this role.[13] Much of the in-service training given by Follow Through sponsors to teachers is intended to increase their awareness of parents as resources, their ability to communicate with parents in order to learn from them, and to develop a parent/school partnership.

As this section suggests, the possible roles of parents in ECE vary considerably. Not infrequently, there are unexpressed, but quite different expectations about which role is meant by "parent involvement in ECE," depending on whether a parent, community organizer, teacher, administrator, or educational planner is using the term. Often, endorsement of parent involvement is limited to one role, and that not very clearly defined either.

4.0 Origins of the trend to increased parent involvement in ECE: beliefs and expectancies.[14]

4.1 Parent education programs: One set of assumptions has been described by Hess et al.

> "A compelling line of argument was developed for parent participation in early education programs. It was contended that early experience affects subsequent intellectual and educational growth and achievement, and that children who grow up in homes disadvantaged by racial discrimination and poverty have a deficit of experiences presumably related to academic achievement in public schools."

From about 1960 to 1970, education programs emphasized a deficit model of what low-income parents bring to child-rearing. This assumption in part is based on the research literature comparing the child-rearing practices of middle-class and lower-income parents or of parents of more and less competent children, such inducing children to ask questions related to causality. The behaviors associated with higher income parents, or the parents of more competent children are thought to mediate more effective child development. Presumably, strengthening low-income parents' ability to educate their children more in the manner used by middle-income parents or by more competent parents, would have immediate effects on the focal child, durable effects on this child since the parental influence continues, and a spread of effect to non-focal children in the family. (See Table 1 for an example of this approach.)

More recently (1970) education-for-parenting programs have been viewed as necessary for middle class as well as low-income families.

Parents-as-decision-maker programs also are often intended to improve child rearing practices. Here the assumption is that parents who feel alienated or lack a sense of control over their own lives can not function as effective child educators. Making decisions is seen as a way of strengthening the parents' sense of competence and self-worth as people who can help their children.

Hypothetical chains linking parent roles (tutors, staff and decision-makers) to improvement in child achievement are described in detail by Stearns and Peterson (op.cit.) and are reproduced in Figures 1, 2, and 3. These analyses may have substantial power as causal frameworks against which available data can be compared, and which permit an hypothesis-testing approach to research on parent involvement. All the chains relate, however, to the educational role of the parent.

4.2 Parents as Change Agents: There is a second line of expectations, one which applies only to decision-maker roles. First, where parents make decisions about early childhood education, it is believed

Table 1: Example of Relationships among Postulates, Assumed Home Setting, Program Characteristics, and outcomes in a Parent Education Program*

Postulates	Home	Instruction	Outcomes
6. The lower class mother does not see herself as the teacher of her own children, lacks effective motivational and instructional techniques	lack of skill in teaching child	teacher demonstration of behavior in the once-a-week home visit	observation of parent-as educator behavior
9. Effective language development requires input at receptive (0-2) level as well as continuous interchange during growing years	low frequency of talk to child	teacher stress on importance of language; provision of words and activities	observation of parent behavior
19. Manner of instruction and emotional climate influence changes in self concept. Home interest in child learning promotes positive identification with parents and an increased sense of competence	self concept	individualized private instruction, pacing to the child	child observation and rating forms

*Derived from Ira J. Gordon, "The Florida Parent Education Projects: A Schematic Representation". Paper presented at Social Science Research Council Meeting, Portsmouth, N.H., May 15, 1968. The table shown here is a brief extract from a longer and more differentiated schematic.

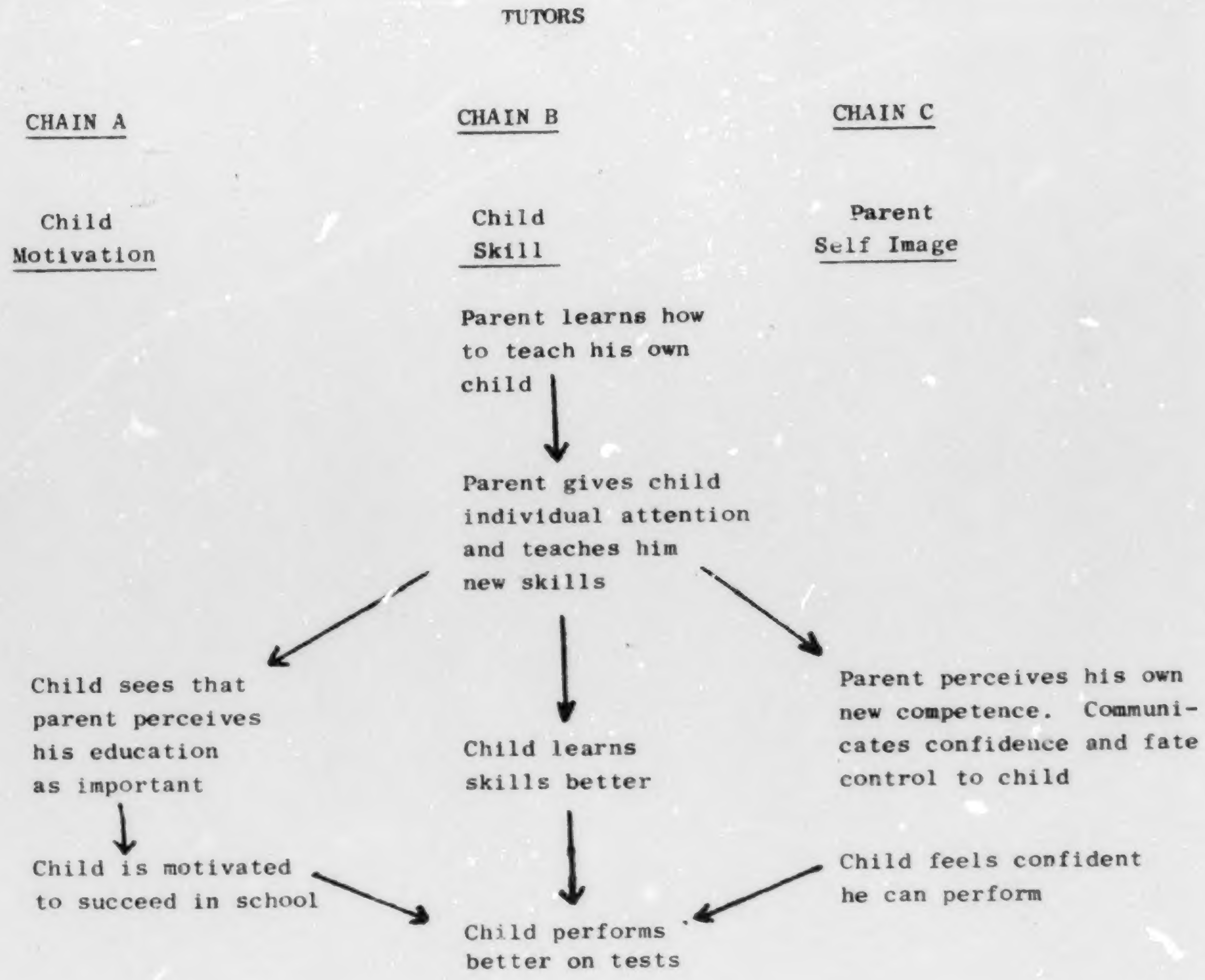
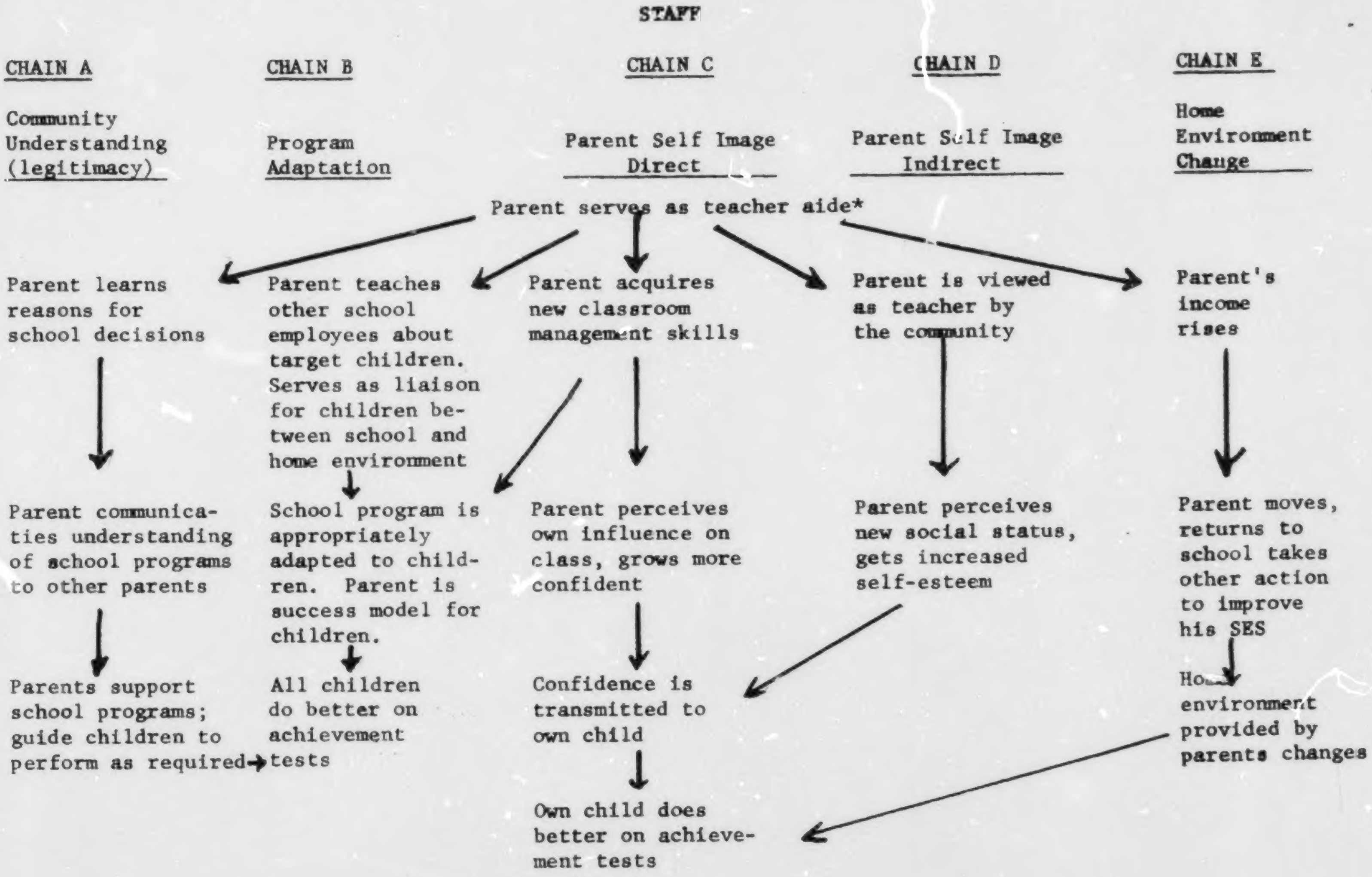

TUTORS
CHAIN A
CHAIN B
CHAIN C
Child Motivation
Child Skill
Parent Self Image
Parent learns how to teach his own child
Parent gives child individual attention and teaches him new skills
Child sees that parent perceives his education as important
Child learns skills better
Parent perceives his own new competence. Communicates confidence and fate control to child
Child is motivated to succeed in school
Child feels confident he can perform
Child performs better on tests

FIGURE 1: PARENTS AS LEARNERS AND TUTORS OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN

From Stearns & Peterson, 1973


STAFF
CHAIN A
Community Understanding (legitimacy)
CHAIN B
Program Adaptation
CHAIN C
Parent Self Image Direct
CHAIN D
Parent Self Image Indirect
CHAIN E
Home Environment Change
Parent serves as teacher aide*
Parent learns reasons for school decisions
Parent teaches other school employees about target children. Serves as liaison for children between school and home environment
Parent acquires new classroom management skills
Parent is viewed as teacher by the community
Parent's income rises
Parent communicaties understanding of school programs to other parents
School program is appropriately adapted to children. Parent is success model for children.
Parent perceives own influence on class, grows more confident
Parent perceives new social status, gets increased self-esteem
Parent moves, returns to school takes other action to improve his SES
Parents support school programs; guide children to perform as required
All children do better on achievement tests
Confidence is transmitted to own child
Home environment provided by parents changes
Own child does better on achievement tests

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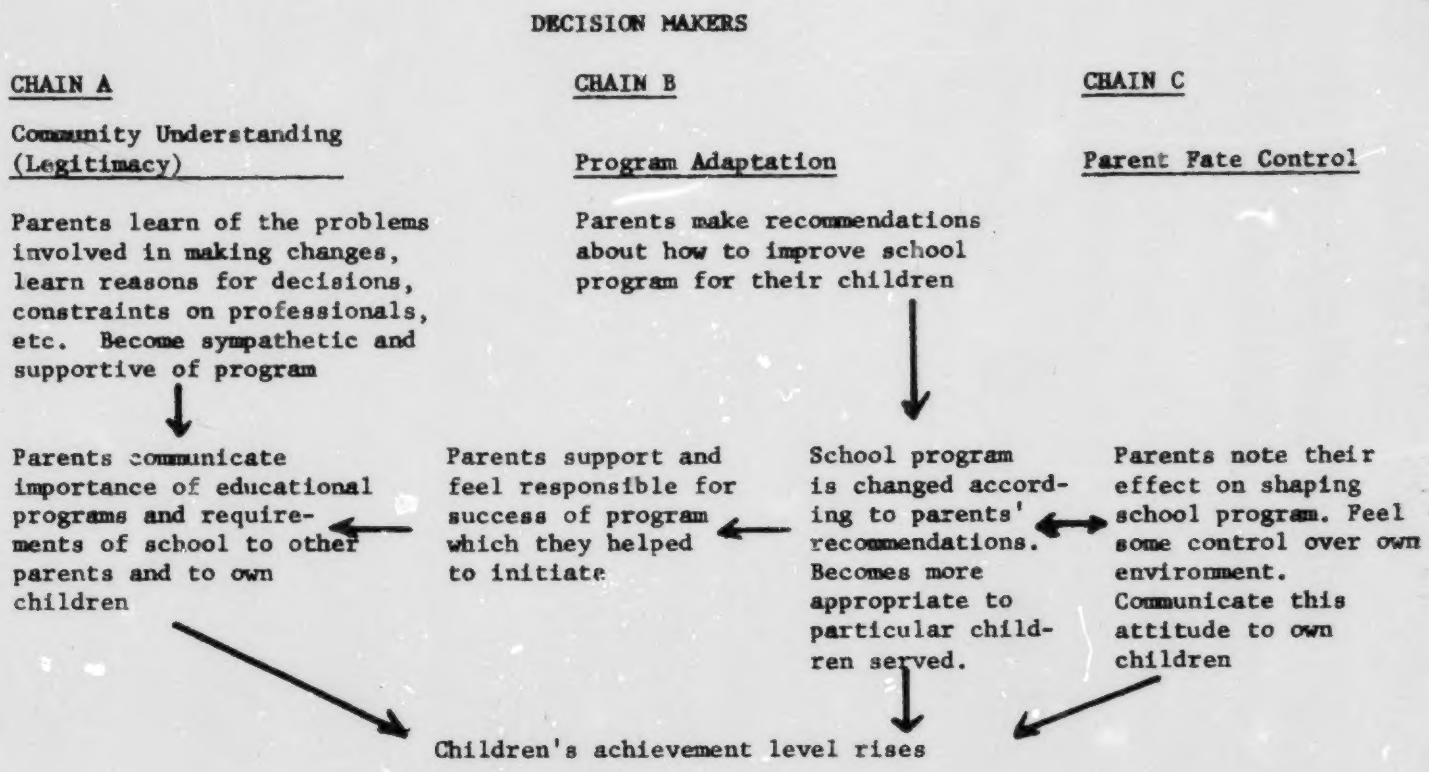
* If parent were employed as home-school coordinator the chain of events on the left would be elaborated.

FIGURE 2: PARENT AS PARAPROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

From Stearns & Peterson, 1973



DECISION MAKERS

CHAIN A

Community Understanding (Legitimacy)

Parents learn of the problems involved in making changes, learn reasons for decisions, constraints on professionals, etc. Become sympathetic and supportive of program

Parents communicate importance of educational programs and requirements of school to other parents and to own children

CHAIN B

Program Adaptation

Parents make recommendations about how to improve school program for their children

School program is changed according to parents' recommendations. Becomes more appropriate to particular children served.

Parents support and feel responsible for success of program which they helped to initiate

CHAIN C

Parent Fate Control

Parents note their effect on shaping school program. Feel some control over own environment. Communicate this attitude to own children

Children's achievement level rises

FIGURE 3: PARENTS AS DECISION MAKERS (From Stearns and Peterson, 1973)

that programs will be more responsive to children. Some educators believe that parent control of ECE is a non-negotiable requirement for programs for children which are not racists, elitist, or paternalistic. Parents feel that since they have the basic responsibility for their children, they should have the unilateral right to make all decisions affecting their lives.[15]

> "Today's parents do not want their children to be part of an institution that answers to no parent, nor do they want their children subjected to government-prescribed curricula. In addition advocates of parental control feel that their method is the only way to assure quality programs as well as the integrity of the family." (Streuer, op. cit., p. 68)

Second, parents may gain skills by participating in program development and management that can lead to better jobs, more rewarding work, greater opportunity for advancement, more likelihood of holding jobs, and a greater sense of personal worth and efficacy. And third, parents and the Policy Councils may become established change agents within the community. In this latter set of expectancies, the benefits to children are indirect and secondary to those for the parents themselves and for the community.

These different expectancies were not stated in legislation authorizing the primary Federal War-on-Poverty programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity and eventually reflected in Head

Start guidelines. In a review of the history of parent involvement in Head Start, Zimmerman notes:[16]

> "Interestingly enough during all this, there was little discussion of what was to become the most controversial feature of the law, the requirement for "maximum feasible participation" of the poor. . . there is absolutely no congressional history for the origin and insertion of the "maximum feasible participation" requirement in the legislation . . . No one knows for sure what the drafters intended in this phrase, or to put it another way, everyone involved may have known what he meant individually, but there was no overall consensus nor even very much discussion." (MIDCO, 1972b, Part I, p. 41)

The 1960's, when maximum feasible participation first appeared in legislation, was a time of social ferment. Civil rights, reallocation of resources to serve the poor, and the control of decisions by those who were affected by them were battle cries in the War against Poverty. It is not surprising that maximum feasible participation was interpreted by community groups as authorizing local governing boards for the Federal programs, and as a precedent for community control of state, local and private projects.

According to Moynihan, maximum feasible participation set the scene for confrontations between the haves and have nots that destroyed the base of support, ever frail, in the Establishment for the expansion and reform of public assistance to the poor.[17] In his view, the policy of maximum feasible participation was based on inaccurate sociology, with little evidence that such a strategy for social reform was necessary, desirable or effective, and with consequences that reverberate today in the lack of funds for social welfare or reform.

According to Greenberg, in the other corner, maximum feasible participation was a conceptually sound policy that in practice changed many institutions, until peoples' organizations challenged the real power and found support from Washington withdrawn.[18] Whether maximum feasible participation really was tried, whether community control has had short run benefits, and what the long term consequences have been are being actively debated.

4.3. Parents as staff: Expectations related to parents as staff members have been mixed. They include, as Figure 2 indicates, better achievement for the child. For many programs, however, parent involvement as paid employees is thought to (i) build community support since low-income communities resent seeing staff salaries go to outsiders while their own people are unemployed, (ii) provide a career ladder for the parent enter an expanding occupation with opportunity for advancement, thus helping the family out of poverty and eventually, upgrading the economic situation in the community, and (iii) capitalize most directly on parents as resources who bring a unique understanding of children into the classroom.

4.4. Parents as resources: About 100 years ago, the educational level of teachers and parents were close. One didn't need a high school or college degree to teach elementary school. But school districts have become larger, the education required for elementary

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teachers has increased, and the neighborhood school has broken down. Parents and teachers, once neighbors and peers, have become strangers. Parents frequently complain of feeling unwelcome, uninformed and unrespected by the school. Teachers complain of parents' indifference, refusal to participate in parent/teacher conferences, readiness to blame the teacher for problems that begin in the home, lack of understanding of the teachers' goals for the children and the problems teachers face, or interference in the educational process.

The renewed emphasis on parents as valued resources grows in part from parent demands. It also grows from an awareness that despite some effects of variations in school characteristics, the greater variations in home background seem to account for many of the differences between children in educational outcomes.[19] Increasing the ability of teachers to use parent knowledge, and of parents to give information in ways that will be helpful to teachers, is a primary objective for many ECE programs.

Strengthening parent/school communication through defining a specific task for parents as evaluators of experimental programs and as purchasers of information about educational costs and results is an emerging emphasis. Regarding parents as the ultimate consumers and as the persons best able to inform educators of short falls is in the tradition of parents as resources for teachers and administration, there is, however the added power that comes from legitimation of the role through direct funding of parents as evaluators or as purchasers of evaluation information whose content and format they specify.[20]

It should be emphasized that these expectations reflect currents and counter-currents in social policy in the United States. To some, parent education makes sense but the notions of parents as decision-makers or as resources are regarded as romantic or political stances, rather than as worthwhile approaches. To others, parent education is patronizing and inaccurate, and an emphasis on parents as decision-makers or as resources makes sense. Some support all roles, perhaps without fully recognizing the conflicts in the assumptions on which they are based.

All four forms--and many variants--exist in the United States today. In the next sections, examples of programs of different types and some evidence of their effectiveness are presented.

5.0 Education for parenting programs: In this section, examples of programs for parents as educators are described, evidence of their effectiveness discussed, and program implications indicated. The section is organized around "when," i.e. the age of the focal child when parent education is initiated, "who," i.e., special or general programs, and "how," i.e., the way in which parent education is provided.

5.1 Is earlier better? Is later, too late?

Parent education programs through home visits to parents of infants, toddlers, preschool children, and elementary school children have been studies. In some programs only home visits are provided. In others, home visits are combined, sequentially or simultaneously, with educational television, parents' group meetings, or center-based ECE. (See Table 2.) Presented below are some examples of programs for each age group, and preliminary findings.[21]

Table 2: Some Parent Education Programs by Child Age, and Instructional Characteristics

Program Origination	Child Age	Instructional Characteristics
A. Infants (0 - 2)		
1. Ira Gordon, 1965	0 - 2	once a week home visitor
2. Ronald Lally, 19760	0 - 3	home vist plus group ECE
3. David Weikart, 1968	0 - 1	once a week home visitor
2. Toddlers (2 - 4)		
1. Phyllis Levenstein, 1965	2 - 4	once a week home visitor
3. Preschool (4 - 6)		
1. Susan Gray, 1963	3 - 6	once a week home visitor (2 winters) plus group ECE (3 summers)
2. Merle Karnes, 1967	3 - 6	once a week home visitor
3. Ira Gordon, 1968	3 - 6	weekly home visits
4. Ann O'Keefe/Home Start 1970	3 - 6	once a week home visitor
4. School Age (6 - 9)		
1. Norma Radin, 1969	6	bi-weekly visits plus kindergarten
2. Ira Gordon, 1968	6 - 9	weekly home visits plus special primary school program.

3.1.1 Programs for parents of infants:

Parent education beginning during pregnancy and after the birth of the children is being provided in Syracuse, New York to about 100 mostly young (16 and 17 year old), low-income, mostly black mothers by Dr. Ronald J. Lally of the Children's Center. For half of the mothers, parent education begins during the sixth month of pregnancy; for the other half, home visits begin after the baby is born. At three months of age, half of the babies enter an educationally oriented, group day care program. The home visitor continues to see the mother (as she does throughout the entire program). The time the baby spends at the program increases until the child attends five days a week, six hours a day at age 3. The other half of the infants enter the group care program at 18 months of age. At 3 years of age, all children are enrolled in a nursery school program. Participation in the Lally program seems to prevent developmental retardation (i.e., the developmental indicators remain steady while the indicators for control babies decrease). There is no evidence, as yet of benefits from beginning parent education prenatally, or from earlier entry into the preschool program. The basic hypothesis Lally is testing is not, however, superior rate of development during the preschool period. He rather is predicting that parent education will sustain child development when the children enter regular public schools three years hence.

Among the products of Lally's work are handbooks for home visitors and child development manuals for day care workers.

Lally's program combines parent education when the focal child is an infant with later group care and continued early childhood education. As might be expected, the Lally program is expensive in its present form. Other projects have adopted the Lally materials, however, and are using them in less expensive settings. Lally's home visitors are low-income mothers, trained and supervised by professional staff. His child care center workers are professionals and volunteers.

Program Implication: Lally's program has demonstrated the feasibility of a home visitor program for mothers of infants using paraprofessionals to serve low-income families. Problems have included avoiding over-dependency on the home visitor, the need to help solve the mother's many difficulties which are not directly related to early childhood education knowledge, and the "pull" of teaching the focal child rather than working with the mother. It is too early to say how effective Lally's program will be in preventing school retardation; it is successful in changing mothers' behavior and attitudes, and of immediate benefit to the babies.

5.1.2. A program for parents of toddlers

In Long Island, New York, Phyllis Levenstein's home visitors have been bringing educational toys and games to the homes of 2 year old children from low and marginal income families for almost five years. The Levenstein program is more purely educational than the Lally program. The toy demonstrators teach parents how to use the toys to help their child learn. The cognitive development of children in the Levenstein program is accelerated. Follow-up studies of child development after the end of the two year program suggests the gains are sustained. Levenstein is experimenting with ways to maintain benefits and reduce costs. For example, she is reducing the number of visits per week, but extending support through monthly mothers' meetings over a longer period of time. Levenstein has produced handbooks and manuals for home visitors. She also has developed a training program. Many social welfare services have adopted the Levenstein approach, with training from Levenstein's institute.

In its original form, Levenstein's program was expensive on a per child basis. Now that the materials are developed, all or parts of the program can be implemented by paraprofessionals guided by a trained Levenstein supervisor.

Program Implication: Levenstein's project, which provides only intensive, educationally oriented tutoring to mothers of toddlers, demonstrates that substantial benefits for the toddler age child can be obtained with home-based training for parents. Levenstein recommends preschool programs for older children, in part for the socialization benefits. She does not regard a two year parent education intervention as a panacea that by itself will accelerate and sustain child development. To Levenstein, the toy demonstrator program is a feasible way of educating young children and their parents on which later educational experiences can build. Whether the approach is replicable at a low to be accessible to many children is not yet known. Also, until the children enter regular public school, the "build on" and "preventive" success of the Levenstein approach is uncertain. Early data on costs, benefits and reproducibility are encouraging.

5.1.3 Programs for parents of preschool (3 to 5 year old) children

In many programs for preschool children home visits for parent education are one component of comprehensive center-based activities. There are, however, some programs for this age group which are home-based.

Project Home Start, directed by Dr. Ruth Ann O'Keefe,[22] is a three year national experiment funded by Head Start to test the value of providing comprehensive services in a home based program. Home Start children receive nutritional, health, social and psychological services. Their educational program is developed through home visitors who help mothers learn a variety of parenting skills.

Each of the 16 demonstration programs receives approximately $100,000 for a 12-month period and serves about eighty families. National guidelines left much latitude for diversity within the program.

Each project has a staff of trained home visitors, mostly paraprofessional women who live near the families they serve. In most cases, the home visitor roles include "teacher, sympathetic listener, helper, advisor and a friend to the entire family being served."

As examples of local program objectives for the education component, Home Starts may provide parents with information and materials to become better educators of their children; identify materials in the home that can be used for toys and games and learning; and help parents reinforce their children's positive behavior. As examples of activities, the home visitors may take parents to local libraries and show the parents shelves with books on child rearing; prepare simple guides to accompany children's television programs which are shown locally, to make television watching less passive and more active; and hold mothers' group meetings to help mothers learn to use one another as resources in finding solutions to child rearing problems.

Home Start is entering its second full year of operation in Fall 1973. Data from the first year show the feasibility of operating a home based program in diverse geographic and cultural settings.

Reports describing the 15 experimental programs and manuals for training home visitors are available. Benefits/cost data comparing Home Start against control, no-treatment children and cost/effectiveness data comparing Home Start children and parents to children participating in the center-based Head Start program will be available in 1975.

At present, Home Start does not seem to be less expensive or more effective than a center-based approach. Its greatest value may be as an alternate way of providing preschool education where center-based programs are difficult to operate. Home Start may also be an alternative for children who are not ready for a group experience. It is possible, however, that the benefits of Home Start will show up after the children enter regular public schools, in the greater durability of Home Start effects. In this case, the Home Start approach may be the more desirable model, with center-based variants less frequently indicated.

Program Implication: The Home Start approach is already being adopted as a program component in many Head Starts. Home Start-like programs sponsored by state and local agencies and voluntary organizations are spreading. There are many guidelines and handbooks available for home visitors for 3 to 5 year old children. The Home Start concept is likely to become the prevalent form of early education for 3 to 5 year olds, alone or in some combination with center-based experiences.

5.1.2 Parent education for children in elementary school

Project Follow Through is a Federally sponsored compensatory education project in which 21 approaches to elementary education are being studied. One of these approaches, originally developed by Dr. Ira Gordon and his associates at the University of Florida for education of infants, emphasizes the tie between teacher and parent as co-educators of the children. Home visitors regularly teach parents of kindergarten, first, second and third grade children how to help their child's development. The visitors coordinate the educational help the parents give their children with the child's classroom activities. Parents are encouraged to spend considerable time in the classroom as volunteers and aides. Teachers meet often with parents to learn from them about the child and to develop shared activities fostering the child's education.[23]

Like other Follow Through programs, the Gordon Home Visitor approach costs more than regular public school programs. Data from the national evaluation show benefits for the children, though their gains are no greater than those of children in other programs. In the area of parental attitudes toward the school, and toward education generally, however, parents whose children participate in the Gordon approach are more satisfied with their children's education, and more optimistic about the value of education.[24]

Something of the problems of defining implementation of a model program and of carrying it out are shown in 1972-73 data from a parent questionnaire. As Table 3 shows, the difference between the least involved and most involved average responses from 12 communities is usually about 40 percentage points. Such data underscore the tentative nature of our knowledge of program effects and replicability.

Table 3: Variation in Parent Involvement within a Parent-As-Educators Program (N = 6302 Parents in 12 Communities (% answering at least once versus never)*

Item	Lowest	Highest	Average
1. Mother visits school	40%	86%	73%
2. Mother work in classroom	11	50	35
3. Attend Parent group meeting	21	54	42
4. Attend PAC meeting	21	63	44
5. Discussed PAC meeting with Parent education (PE)	17	71	49
6. In form PE of PAC meeting	17	84	62
7. Plans for school visit with PE	13	82	60
8. Discuss Comprehensive services with PE	6	66	45

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* Data provided by Ira Gordon, September 11, 1973

Program Implications: Parent education at elementary school ages does not seem to add a large increment to a good school program in terms of child benefits.[25] Home visits and involving parents as co-educators apparently does affect how parents feel about schools, even in comparison with other good programs. The Follow Through data show more generally positive attitudes toward school among all parents than had been expected, but they also show how little knowledge parents have of what is happening to their children without a concerted outreach program such as the home visitor provides.[26]

In summary, home visitor types of parent education programs appear to benefit the child's development. This conclusion is limited, however, to children from low income families. First, there are no experimental studies of home visitor programs for children from more advantaged backgrounds. A second limitation is that most studies compare home visitor versus no treatment controls; missing is the comparison group needed to ascribe effects to parent education. No study has yet compared a true control group, home visits focused on the child with home visitors focused on the parents.

With these limitations, the findings from the home visitor programs generally show that:

--they are feasible, although outreach and follow-up efforts to retain participation can require considerable energy

--paraprofessionals, under the supervision of professionals, can be trained to be parent educators

--parent attitudes are generally positive, and the programs are usually well received

--there are immediate benefits for the focal child

--these benefits tend to be somewhat more durable than those of center-based programs without home components

--there can be a spread-of-effect to younger children to the family.[27]

On the hand, findings also suggest that:

--the home visitor experimental programs are expensive, though costs may be reduced as the educational materials are used in service settings without the research component and extensive supervision[28]

--where programs are combined with preschools, uncertainty about who is responsible for the child's development may reduce program benefits[29]

How soon should home visitor programs begin? First, while we do not have systematic tests of the relative merits of program initiation at different times for the parents' experiences as well as the child's experiences, earlier may be better for the child and the parent. Bronfenbrenner, reviewing the literature on early interventions, concludes that "...the beneficial influence is substantial if parent intervention is introduced before the child enters school, but the effect is reduced if home visits are not begun until the kindergarten year." Bronfenbrenner also views parent education as a fixative that conserves the effects achieved through child-centered intervention, and as a catalyst "which enhances the impact of other programs which may accompany or follow the parent intervention phase."

Second, durability of effects without continued support is unlikely, if one extrapolates from data on the center-based programs. More attention needs to be paid to continuity of parent education, and provision of alternate ways of obtaining this support for parents in different circumstances.

Third, there may be too much of a good thing (materials for home visitors) with too little consumer protection. Home visitor programs for parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers have been widely but not systematically developed. With the exception of Ira Gordon's handbooks, no didactically coherent ECE materials for parents of 0 through 6 year old children exist, although there are many manuals, guidebooks for parents themselves and home visitor training programs are proliferating. Diversity may be desirable, but consumer information on program objectives and methods is needed to guide choice from age to age.

Fourth, home visitor programs seem to be "the" trend in ECE. The parent education approach is being adopted at the Federal level through Head Start and Home Start. Many state, municipal and private organizations are continuing or starting home visitor parent education services. The home visitor form of parent education seems an idea whose time has come. It has come, however, without solid data on costs, replicability and on immediate and long-term effects. The parent education movement thus may be vulnerable to later deflation of too great expectations and a subsequent under-estimation of the approach's significance.

5.3.: Home visitor and parent education for parents of handicapped children

The early identification and remediation of handicapping conditions seems to reduce later problems. This may be particularly true for children with hearing losses, where very early training to attend to vestigal auditory cues can improve children's ability to hear. Later training and hearing aids offer some relief, but this may be an instance where earlier clearly is better.

There are many early education programs for handicapped children. Some are center-based group experiences. Those are thought to have two advantages. First, such programs concentrate the services of still scarce trained professionals and the expensive special equipment. Second, children's social adjustment appears to be facilitated by early entry into groups with handicapped and non-handicapped youngsters. Project Head Start, for example, now requires that 10% of children in all classes be handicapped.

At the same time, programs to train parents to help their handicapped child are expanding, and reportedly are successful. For example:

> McConnell and Freeman provided parent orientation and audiological management for 94 deaf preschoolers (2 year olds). After a trial period with different hearing aids, a permanent recommendation was made. Parents were present at the audiologic sessions and received instruction in how to encourage auditory behavior, orient the child to sound, and talk to the child. "Findings over three years indicated that language growth accelerated while performance age and nonverbal mental age remained linear. Also, ability to use amplification from the wearable hearing aid

> improved, with improved mean threshold response to spoken voice of more than 20 db. The parent mobilized themselves into pressure groups resulting in legislation for education of preschoolers. Community approval of the project resulted in continuance of its services after federal finding ceased."[30]

5.3.2: Parent education for low income families:

Most experimental home visitor and parent education programs serve low-income families. Middle class parents spontaneously have organized parent cooperative nursery schools and play groups for many years. Low-income mothers often lacked the skills and opportunities to develop these programs. As noted earlier, much recent public support of early child education has been predicated on the belief that early intervention prevents later social-class related deficits. It is not surprising that demonstration home visitor programs also have served low-income parents.

- The Appalachian Education Laboratory's television program, "Round the Bend" is coupled with a mobile playschool. The playschool van is usually driven to the home once a week. While the children play in a supervised group setting, mothers are instructed in how to use educational materials left by the home visitor and how to build on the educational messages of "Round the Bend."

- The pioneering DARCEE program for 3 to 5 year old children from low-income families combined summer participation in a group preschool with home visiting during the winter by trained paraprofessionals. Among the results of this program have been immediate cognitive benefits for the focal child, diffusion of benefits to younger children in the family, a spread of parenting information and benefits to other children in the neighborhood, and improvements in the parents' personal lives.

- The 36 experimental Parent-Child Centers for focal children from 0 to 3 years of age are funded by Project Head Start. These serve hard-to-reach and often extremely impoverished families. One family was living in a tent made from a surplus parachute. Another, when discovered, was living in a cave. Others lived in shacks where the water supply and the outdoor toilet were within a few feet of each other. The schacks were unheated and without electricity. Although the program was to focus on parent education for child development, the survival needs of these parents had to be met before they could act on instruction on child rearing. The program was also committed to using paraprofessionals, mostly mothers, from the same families, which required a two to three year start-up and training period. Recent reports indicate considerable success at general family rehabilitation, although the costs per family are high for the three year program.

Experience with parent education programs for extremely low-income populations indicates that parent education can be one component within a multi-service framework. Recruiting very low-income families takes skill, time, and effort. Parents upwardly mobile tend to volunteer for these programs. They also appear to benefit more readily from educational services.

There is probably some threshold of readiness for parent education, below which investment in educational support has marginal returns. One may speculate that returns from parent education alone among families whose children often show greatest developmental retardation may be least. Perhaps for these families, later child-centered educational support may be better strategy, until the public is willing to invest in the extensive, long-term rehabilitative efforts probably needed by multi-problem families.[31]

5.3.3 Parent education for all sectors: Parent education for all sectors of society has been advocated. Some experimental programs to provide this are underway. Zigler, discussing the value of preschool programs which would universally reduce the age of entry to 4 years and be operated by public schools writes, "School people do not determine to a great extent the development of children. Families do that, and your three hours of nursery and your five or six hours in a school day clearly did not have the impact that the home life of the child had in determining what the child is to become. Schools must quit ignoring that fact and begin developing mechanisms that make a reality of some kind of school/family cooperation in the education of children.

"One aspect that I would propose as an experiment is this: Why don't we enroll children in school when they 're born? Actually, I would really like to enroll them the day after the mother conceives. ...Why don't we appreciate that education is a developmental phenomenon, and if we really want to help children, we start there?

"What we should do with such programs, is to incorporate what we've been learning in Home Start and other experimental programs around the country to help parents in their role as parents. Help them in the raising of their children; give them the knowledge and information.

"What this would involve is not every child coming to the school building but rather periodic visits and parents coming to the school en masse. We could use television more than we're using it. There's a variety of things that we can do in the first five years of life that would help the child through the family. Further, if you could do that, you would have a continuous support system in the home that you could work with as the child goes through school---a real partnership".[32]

Zigler's vision is being put into practice in the experimental

Massachusetts Early Education Program (BEEP).

o In BEEP, all children will receive medical and psychological diagnostic services designed for early detection of potential handicaps to health and education. Initial diagnosis will be followed by educational programs which will be somewhat different for each of three groups of children and parents. All parents will participate in a program designed to help them become more effective in rearing their children. Daytime and evening discussion groups, seminars, lectures, workshops, and films will be available. BEEP will maintain a lending library of toys, pamphlets, books, and other materials at the neighborhood center which will help interested parents to understand and meet the needs of their young children. The other two components of the educational program--home visits and infant education at the center-will be offered at frequent intervals to one group, less frequently to the second group, and not at all to the third. Home visitors will observe the infants and help the mothers to increase their awareness of the children's development and need for a comfortable but stimulating environment. At the center, the infants in the first two groups will be exposed to materials and surroundings especially designed to stimulate their curiosity, encourage emerging abilities, and give them a chance to "socialize" with other children and adults. The children's development will be evaluated at specific intervals and will be used in assessing the effect of the various levels of expenditure and education that the children received.

BEEP is administered jointly by personnel from the Brookline Public Schools and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Pediatricians from the Children's Hospital Medical Center oversee and coordinate the project's medical aspects. During the planning stages parents, professional members of the community, school officials, and teachers became involved in the project, and several advisory committees have been formed to continue this participation. One hoped-for outcome will be the establishment of lasting patterns of institutional cooperation in offering support to families.

The notion of parent education for all sectors is consistent with the rising concern that being poor should not be equated with being a bad parent, and with programs that also serve lower middle class and middle class parents. First, it is felt that inclusion only of one economic class will erode popular support for programs. Second, economically segregated programs can add to, rather than reduce, the habit of equating poverty with deficiencies in all aspects of life. Economically segregated ECE programs may have increased the labels which reduce adult ability to see children as individuals. Lastly, segregated programs prohibit rather than promote mixing at early ages before social class prejudice develop. On the other hand, the feasibility of large-scale delivery of parent education programs, the cost of such enterprises and whether the benefits anticipated will be obtained are as yet unknown.

5.4 Delivery systems for parent education:

Development of feasible delivery systems for parent education has received some attention.

5.4.1 Television programs for parent education:

About 97% of all American families have at least one television set. Many have two. Even among very low income families, television ownership rarely drops below 90%. If television were effective in delivering parent education, a feasible delivery system thus exists in most homes.

Two projects are already underway:

- At Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida an experimental television series for mothers of infants from 0 through 3 years of age is being produced and tested.
- The Rocky Mountain Satellite project and the Appalachian Educational Laboratory are developing television programs for parent and child care worker education. These programs scheduled for transmission in fall 1974.

Among the issues in using television to deliver parent education are (i) whether parents and care takers will learn anything substantial through an essentially passive activity; (ii) what auxilliary materials and services may be necessary to supplement the TV programs, and (iii) how program content can be responsive to cultural diversity.

While these issues are being examined, interest in television as a delivery system for parent education remains high, but programmatically neglected.

5.4.2 Multi-media educational materials: Popularly priced information on child rearing is available through a variety of sponsors.[33] "Baby and Child Care" by Dr. Benjamin Spock has reached an estimated 24,000,000 people since its publication in 1945. The Children's Bureau publication, "Infant Care: Your Child from One to Six," has sold over 50,000,000 copies. In addition to these best sellers, books and pamphlets on child-rearing are widely marketed, including places such as drug stores and grocery stores as well as libraries and bookshops.

The potential of regular radio and newspaper columns on child rearing is being explored. Dorothy Rich, syndicated through the Washington Post, has published weekly columns on child rearing and recently began a Home/School Institute to train school personnel and parents on how to work together.[34] Many popular women's magazines carry articles on ECE and child rearing, which reach wide audiences.

Schools are also experimenting with multi-media techniques for parent education. For example, learning kits using cassette tape, workbooks and some prepared materials intended for parents of preschool children and distributed through the public schools are being tested in Provo, Utah. Among the titles are, "Four Ways Parents Teach," "Language Development of Children" and "Helping Children to Form Concepts and Improve Their Ability to Reason" The cost of preparing such materials could be relatively low in comparison to benefits, if parent acceptability is high and if parents are able to learn through these self-instructional programs.

Multi-media materials can be produced cheaply, and distributed popularly through schools, shopping centers, gasoline stations, voluntary organizations and outreach workers. For many parents, such multi-media information probably would provide enough additional support to be worth the cost.

It is likely that less motivated parents or parents less able to benefit from self-instructional systems will need other forms of outreach. Program planners could, however, profitably consider ways of improving the quality and outreach of these materials. For example, writers could be subsidized to prepare more articles on ECE for magazines and newspapers reaching minority groups, or a sliding fee scale applied to subscriptions to magazines which carry articles on ECE to increase their distribution among low-income families. Radio and TV announcements could increase public awareness of ECE and corporations could be encouraged to donate some prime time spots for public service announcements on ECE. Cassette tapes oriented to the needs of parents from ethnic and racial minorities could help parent education be responsive to the needs of multi-cultural audiences. Incentives for parent verification of the value of these materials and their frequent updating could be provided to publishers and distributors. Again, the costs of production and marketing would need to be weighed against the returns. It would be fallacious merely to identify increased public awareness of the parental role in ECE with direct benefits for the children.

5.4.3 Mother groups and group programs :

Informal mothers groups, parent/teacher meetings, and classes on parenting skills are increasing.

Many low-tuition parent education courses are available through the public schools and community colleges. While data are scant, apparently most participants are middle class. Expansion of these programs and improvement of instructional materials may be a feasible delivery system for this sector of the population.

Parent/teacher meetings on topics including early childhood education have long been offered through public schools and voluntary organizations. Participation in these programs has tended to be limited to relatively few parents. The quality of instruction apparently is quite variable. It would seem likely that these meetings can stimulate interest in more sustained and intensive education for parenting courses, rather than provide sufficient information by themselves.

One media-cum-group program receiving much attention is the Parent/Child Toy Lending Library. The Parent/Child Toy Lending Library is an eight-week course (about one hour a week) for parents of preschool children. The course can be conducted in a variety of settings. Anyone can operate the course after completing a brief training workshop.

> Eight basic toys are used to teach different concepts and to enhance language development. At the course sessions, parents learn to work with the toys and games and then borrow them to take home to use with their own children. After completing the course, parents are free to borrow these toys, as well as additional toys, just as one would borrow a book from a library. For each toy, there are easy-to-follow directions for several learning activities that teach specific concepts and skills. The eight basic toys are:
>
> 1. Sound cans--auditory discrimination
> 2. Color lotto--problem solving, color matching
> 3. Feely bag--tacile discrimination
> 4. Wooden table blocks--relational concepts
> 5. Stacking toy--problem solving
> 6. Bead-o-Graph-visual discrimination, motor coordination
> 7. Number puzzle--numerical concepts and counting
> 8. Flannel board--size and shape concepts
>
> Each parent taking the course receives an easy-to-read Parent Guide explaining different games at different levels of difficulty to play with toy. At the course sessions, parents view filmstrips showing different adults playing games with their children. Those taking the course practice playing games and discuss the methods involved. Course sessions are also planned to allow plenty of time for parents to discuss their own problems relating to education or child growth.[35]
>
> The cost of setting up a parent/child toy lending library program, including training, is about $1,000 for service to an estimated 40 families. Operational costs would depend on the librarian/course leader's salary, rent, advertising, possible subsidies for parent transportation and baby-sitting, and eventual replacement costs of the toys.

Special parent groups have been tried, and found effective where the leader was unusually capable and extensive outreach was provided. The results of these programs have varied from marginal to encouraging; the greatest benefits seem to be on mother's attitudes. Effects on the children's development are uncertain.[36]

On the other hand, mothers' group meetings in conjunction with home visitor programs have been popular. High participation and mothers' use of each other as sources of ideas and information are reported. Developing mothers' groups to sustain child rearing activity after the home visitor programs taper off may be a fruitful avenue to explore.

5.4.4 Parents as volunteers in preschool programs:

Parent education through participation as volunteers in preschool programs has been encouraged by almost all nursery and privately supported preschools. Some even require as a condition of enrolling the child that parents spend a certain amount of time each week in the classroom and serve on various committees essential to the school program.

The results of volunteering on the parents and children has been little studied.[37] Participation is often difficult to elicit and sustain. Too often, the "volunteer" program is reduced to a few highly active parents or is sustained only as an enforced requirement for child enrollment. Directors of both expensive, highly praised private ECE programs and of subsidized day care programs have complained about the difficulty of enlisting parents as volunteers or even as participants in parent/teacher meetings.

On the other hand, participating parents report obtaining much insight into childhood education and what children could learn, if properly taught. Many paraprofessional (and professional) early childhood educators began as volunteers in preschool programs. And, "learning by doing" is a well-established principle in other areas; it ought to be a powerful technique for parent education.

Despite the lack of outcome information, policy studies of ways to increase parent participation as volunteers in preschool groups as a means of parent education seem worthwhile.

5.4.5. Parent Education before Parenthood

Another form of learning by doing is found in the new "education for parenting programs" developed for junior and senior high school aged children.[38]

On an experimental basis, high schools throughout the country are offering optional programs training young men and women in child care and child rearing. Often, these courses include practical experience as child care workers in preschools located within the high school physical facility, or in the nearby area. Other schools are experimenting with "tutoring" arrangements between older and younger children, which increase individualization of instruction and may help the older child develop teaching skills.

These activities will be rapidly expanded in 1973-1974 when, under Federal sponsorship, over 500 schools will introduce parent education courses in grades 7 through 12. Of these, about 200 will use the model curriculum developed by the Educational Development Center called, "Exploring Childhood". The remaining 300 public and private schools will be furnished materials and technical assistance to help them initiate or expand their parenting programs.

The rest will use curricula of their own. In addition, seven national youth-serving organizations and their affiliates in 29 sites have been funded to implement education for parenting programs. Among these organizations are the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts of America, the National 4-H program, the Salvation Army, and the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, groups that together reach millions of youth from varied backgrounds in all areas of the country. After the 1973-74 testing and 1974-75 revision, "Exploring Childhood" will be available for national use in Fall, 1975.

Data on the immediate and longer-term effects of education-for-parenting programs are almost non-existent. Studies of the effectiveness of the Federal Office of Education-Office of Child Development sponsored project are planned, but it will be several years before we know the acceptability of such programs to youth, and their value in improving parenting skills.

In summary, enthusiasms for different forms of preschool education tended to swing to extremes. At one time, center-based programs for 3 to 5 year olds were hailed as necessary for preventing the cognitive and personal-social deficits assumed to be responsible for the poor performance of low income children on measures of academic achievement in primary and secondary schools.

Now we know that such programs do immediate good for many children, and some longer-term good for some children, but that nation-wide investment in one earlier year of early education isn't likely to raise reading scores in the third grade very much. Enthusiasm for starting with infants and for parent education in part evolved from "disappointments" with the center-based programs. Again, we know that parent education in all its variety can help the focal children, probably their younger brothers and sisters, and improve parents' confidence in their ability to help their child learn. But there are policy dilemmas. The intensive programs seem most effective, and are costly. Programs using mass media have low per-unit costs but probably benefit a few parents a great deal and more parents only moderately. A number of alternate ways of educating parents has been suggested in these notes. Needed are data and analyses relating program costs, program effects and parent needs, so that public investments can be better matched to the size of the problem and to realistic expectations of what is required to do something worthwile about it.

Such analyses require data not now available. One can, however, outline the steps required:

1. Development of indicators of parent knowledge, competencies, willingness and ability to use these competencies.

Parts of such indicators are available. There are observational forms and survey techniques which can be used to assess parent competency as teachers and parent knowledge. There are also scales of barriers to parent application of knowledge due to constraining economic circumstances. Measurement of parent willingness or motivation to apply knowledge is as yet undeveloped.

While reliable, useful scales will require considerable effort, it seems within our research competence to prepare such general indicators of parent education needs.

2. Analyses of available data and/or development of experimental studies to establish the cost/effectiveness of different forms of intervention in relation to parental need.

Throughout this paper, estimates of the probable benefits of different forms in comparison to assumed parental need have been offered. These are based on inference from findings rather than experimental comparisons.

Cross-national studies, or systematic analysis of available data might be sufficient to guide policy decisions, given the variety of forms of parent education which have been tried.

It is also possible that a social experiment comparing different delivery systems for parents with different initial levels of need would provide a more solid basis for policy decisions.

3. Examination of different delivery systems for maximum coverage at minimum cost: for example, if courses on parent education are optimal for many middle-income parents, what incentives are needed to increase participation in such courses?

Would provision of courses at employer sites, rather than in evenings on parents' times, be worthwhile? Should mobile parent education vans bring the classroom to the neighborhood? Should materials be developed and training given to instructors in parent education for church groups and voluntary organizations to increase the quality of information available through these channels?

It is likely that a variety of alternative forms with alternative delivery systems will be needed. The advantage of the systematic study proposed is a better utilization of resources than the present profusion of approaches may offer. Of course, most of the approaches described did not originate with a central planning group. They developed informally in a variety of sectors, and probably represent an excellent match of local need and local resources.

Central planners systems all too often do not take into account the tendency of systems to adapt to needs. In parent education, it would seem the central planning role could be systematic collection of information, and dissemination of reports on the costs, feasibility and benefits of alternatives for use by parent/community planning groups. Some options may require investments beyond local resources, e.g., television production, development and testing of curriculum materials, and training programs for trainers. Assessment of the need for such activities and the quality of their content would benefit from more two-way communication between parent groups and central planners, a communication that has been too often missing.

6.0 Parent Participation in decision-making

The three primary forms of parent participation in educational decision-making are through citizens' organizations, **elected Boards of Education, and direct** parental action on behalf of their own children. Citizens' organizations, such as the Parent/Teacher Associations,[39] provide channels for parent/school communication. Through participation in the elected Boards of Education which govern most public school districts, parents have the opportunity **for a** direct voice in the education **of their children.**[40] In principle, parents can come to schools to influence day-to-day operations affecting their children.

These forms of participation have not functioned perfectly for middle-class parents. For low income parents, they have been almost useless. There are many movements in progress to reverse this situation, such as creation of community school boards within larger school districts and increased representation on Boards of Education from low-income, ethnic and racial minority sectors--and **by students. While sustained, effective citizen participation in education is still** limited, the trend is toward a better balance between professional and lay control of public education for low-income and middle-class sectors alike.

In early childhood education, parent participation as decision-makers has been practiced most extensively in programs supported by Federal funds: in Project Head Start, in Follow Through, and in school districts receiving monies from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).[41] All three programs have requirements for parent involvement, including participation as decision-makers.

In addition, day care programs which receive money from the Social Security Act, Title IV; from Title I (Youth programs), Title II (Urban and Rural Community Action programs), Title III (Migrant assistance programs) and Title V (Day care projects) of the Economic Opportunity Act; and from Title I of ESEA are required to be in compliance with the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements. The Requirements cover day care facilities, environmental standards, social services, health and nutrition services, staff training, administration and coordination, evaluation, education, and parent involvement.

As an example of the parent involvement mandated for programs receiving Federal funds, the Federal Interagency Day Care guidelines for parent involvement require:[42]

> "1. Opportunities must be provided parents at times convenient to them to work with the program and whenever possible to observe their children in the day care facility.
>
> 2. Parents must have the opportunity to become involved themselves in the making of decisions concerning the nature and operation of the day care facility.
>
> 3. Whenever an agency provides day care for 40 or more children, there must be a policy advisory committee. Committee membership should include not less than 50 percent parents or parent representatives, selected by the parents themselves...

4. Policy advisory committees must perform productive functions, including but not limited to

a. assisting in the development of the programs and approving applications for funding

b. participating in the nomination and selection of the program director

c. advising on the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers

d. initiating suggestions and ideas for program improvements

e. serving as a challenge for hearing complaints

f. assisting in organizing activities for parents

g. assuming a degree of responsibility for communicating with parents and encouraging their participation in the program". (*op cit*., pp.14-15)

Examination of the Head Start, Follow Through, ESEA and day care parent involvement requirements as they were initially, and as they have been modified over the years shows (i) that most Guidelines began with the parent education and parents-as-resource roles, and (ii) that the parent-as-decision-maker role has gained prominence since 1970.[43] The Head Start 1970 guidelines, for example, specify on what decisions the Policy Councils have "information", "concur" and "approval/veto" responsibilities. Many of the central decisions in program operation--budgets, staff, program content--must receive Policy Council approval before the program application for refunding is sent to Head Start Regional Offices for final endorsement. At least 50% of the Policy Council members must be parents who are elected as representatives by other Head Start parents.

As Stearns and Peterson (op cit.) point out, however, most Guidelines (i) do not acknowledge the possibility of conflict between parents and administrators, thus offering few ways to settle disputes, and (ii) are without enforcement mechanisms.[44] The Day Care and ESEA declarations on parent involvement are particularly weak in these respects.

While Head Start and Follow Through have monitoring systems for compliance with all Guidelines, including parent involvement, the monitoring systems have been slow to get into operation. Also needed are better record-keeping and uniform ways to assess "compliance across administrative regions and programs. For example, MIDCO (op cit.) reports:

> "The (1972) survey... does not present a picture of how the current parent participation policy (1970) is being implemented in a typical Head Start. The telephone survey conducted at the beginning of this project indicates that there are many programs which do not appear to be implementing the new policy statement. There is no enforcement procedure that is uniformly applied to all programs..."

For a nation in which local control of educational resources is a major issue, there is little information on the extent of parent participation in decision-making according to the existing Guidelines, and on barriers to full partipation. (See Table 4, from Yin et al.) Krulee, Hetzner and McHenry, describing Follow Through, write:[45]

> "All projects support activities of two kinds. First, there is the involvement of parents in the classroom as part of an instructional team. Secondly, there is the involvement of parents in the activities of the Policy Advisory Committee so they may take part in support of Follow Through and in the process of decision-making.

Table 4 : Summary of Citizen Participation Requirements and Compliance in Federally Sponsored Educational Programs (From Yin et al., 1973)

OMB Number	Program	Usual Grantee[a]	Approx. 1973 Budget		Citizen Participation Requirements		Apparent Compliance[c]
			No. of Projects	Amount ($ million)	Type	Level[b]	
	EDUCATION						
13.400	Adult Education	SEAs	500	50	State Adv. Com.; Local Adv. Com. Paraprofs.	R R	S
13.401	Adult Education	LEAs and Non-prof.	50	7	State Adv. Com.; Local Adv. Com. Paraprofs.	R R	S
13.410	Dropout Prevention	LEAs	20	10	Local Adv. Council Paraprofs.	G	G
13.420	Drug Abuse Prevention	All	100	12	General Citizen Participation	G	S
13.520	Handicapped-Special Children	All	24	2	Local Adv. Council	R	S
13.403	Bilingual Education	LEAs and Non-profs.	200	35	Local Adv. Bd. Paraprofs./Volun.	G L	G
13.408	Public Library Const.	SLAs	100	6	State Adv. Council	L	P
13.464	Public Library Services	SLAs	70	40	State Adv. Council	L	P
13.465	Interlibrary Services	SLAs	100	3	State Adv. Council	L	P
13.480	School Libraries	SEAs	120	90	State Adv. Com.	R	P
13.421	Career Opportunities Training	SEAs and LEAs	130	24	Local Adv. Bds.	G	G
13.427	Title I-Handicapped	SEAs	132	56	Parental Involvement	G	P
13.428	Title I-Grants	LEAs	14,000	1,407	Parent Adv. Councils (majority membership)	R	G
13.429	Title I-Migrants	SEAs and LEAs	1,000	65	Local Adv. Councils Paraprofs.	— G	G
13.431	Title I-Neglected and Delinq. Children	SEAs and LEAs	900	20	None		P
13.433	Follow Through	LEAs and CAAs	170	62	Strong Local Adv. like OEO; Paraprofs.	R	G

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[a] SEA=State Education Agency; SLA=State Library Agency; LEA=Local Education Agency; CAA=Community Action Agency.

[b] L=Law; R=Regulations; G=Guidelines.

[c] P=Poor; S=Sporadic; G=General; N=New program (no experience); U=Unknown.

Table 4: Continued

OMB Number	Program	Usual Grantee[a]	Approx. 1973 Budget No. of Projects	Approx. 1973 Budget Amount ($ million)	Citizen Participation Requirements Type	Citizen Participation Requirements Level[b]	Apparent Compliance[c]
	EDUCATION (Continued)						
13.444	Handicapped Early Childhood Assist.	All	90	8	Local Adv. Council Paraprofs.	R R	G
13.445	Deaf-Blind Centers	All	120	8	Regional Adv. Com. Paraprofs.	R	G
13.448 and 13.451	Handicapped Teacher Training	SEAs and Non-profs	450	34	New	G	N
13.449	Handicapped Pre-school Services	LEAs and SEAs	1,200	38	State Adv. Boards	G	S
13.482	Disadv. Students in Higher Education	Higher Ed.	200	15	Local Adv. Boards	G	P
13.488	Talent Search	Higher Ed.	90	5	Local Adv. Boards Paraprofs.	G G	S
13.492	Upward Bound	Higher Ed.	300	30	Local Adv. Boards Paraprofs.	G G	G
13.493 to 13.504	Vocational Education	SEAs and LEAs	500 (?)	115	State Adv. Board Local Adv. Board	L R	G P
13.505	Urban/Rural	LEAs	25	7	Governing Council Paraprofs.	G	G
13.516	Education Special Projects	LEAs	140	20	Community Council Paraprofs.	G G	G
13.521	Experimental Schools	All	3	15	New	--	S
13.523	School Health and Nutrition	LEAs and Non-profs	8	2	Uses Title I Parent Adv. Committee	--	G
13.524	Emergency School Assistance	LEAs	450	64	Local Adv. Board	R	G

[a] SEA=State Education Agency; LEA=Local Education Agency.

[b] L=Law; R=Regulations; G=Guidelines.

[c] P=Poor; S=Sporadic; G=General; N=New program (no experience); U=Unknown.

From our observations of local projects, we have gradually formed some impressions about these programs. For example, these programs appear to develop slowly and with difficulty. It would appear to take two to three years in order to develop an active and successful program.

There are some important barriers to be overcome... After all, many poor parents have reservations about the potential value of participating. They may also be somewhat afraid of teachers and school officials and be quite uncertain of the response they can expect to receive from these same individuals. In order to develop a successful program one needs to be able to demonstrate to parents that their participation is of value and to help parents develop some confidence in the possibility that their contributions will be respected." (p. 359)

Stearns and Peterson (op. cit.) agree:

"The primary reason why parent involvement most often fails to have an impact on children is because it is minimal....The main reason for (low participation) are the pressures of meeting survival needs and feelings of psychological inferiority or social inferiority. If strategies for meeting these needs do not exist, themo parent involvement...can not be expected to have a lasting impact on children." (p. 41)

They delineate some additional problems:

--some parents may fail to participate because others (militants or people with a desire to carry out extraneous political purposes) do.

--some low income communities believe that educational institutions are not amenable to change or are irrelevant to the needs of their community.

--in some communities, participation as a paraprofessional within the existing school system would make the parent's status ambigous, and might confuse parental self-image rather than improve it.

--some parents may be unwilling to accept decision-making roles since participation in a PAC might be seen as endorsement of the school.

In addition to problems in encouraging parent participation, there are problems in developing effective groups, and then in the conflicts which may arise when either a checks and balance role really develops, or a community group seeks extensive social changes:

--parents may lack detailed financial or program information needed to operate effectively as decision-makers, and the program is unable or unwilling to provide this information

--parents may lack needed skills and programs can not mobilize adequate training programs. (Elected and appointed School Boards experience similar needs for training materials to fulfill their responsibilities)

--some programs can not or do not continue lone enough to produce the intended effects, due to "erratic and inadequate funding from state educational and Federal agencies."

--parents may demand some change in the school program and its implementation by professionals may have ill effects rather than good effects on children's attitudes and achievement.

--something else becomes the main issue on which PAC and program personnel focus their attention. "School administrators may be willing or able to change practices in a very few domains, but parents often have not limited their concerns to these more flexible areas...Parents have most often centered their attention on certain personnel decisions, hiring or firing. Some of the power struggles that ensued probably modified the school for the better but...evidence exists that these experiences can be alienating for both parties."

--state and Federal guidelines can cause great difficulties. For example, Title I guidelines require that when project decisions are made, parents constitute more than 50% of the voting body. However, there appears to be no specified recourse available when decisions are made in the absence of such a quorum. (Stearns and Peterson, p. 44)

In summary, one programmatic implication is that there are several "models" or assumptions about the reasons for parent participation as decision-makers. In communities seeking to emphasize parent decision-making, it would seem essential to begin with making convert assumptions overt and to prepare guidelines of rights and responsibilities that are extremely specific. The schools and the community can then better anticipate disputes that may arise from unshared expectations, and develop ways in which these perhaps naturally arising conflicts can be used constructively.

A second programmatic implication is that guidelines without enforcement mechanisms are ineffective. In part, failure to enforce guidelines has been due to lack of instruments to measure compliance. Better techniques to assess parent participation should be developed, and applied by citizens groups as well as by officials.

A secondary aspect of lack of enforcement is that programs are often evaluated without assessment of whether the program in practice resembles the program on paper. The guidelines, rather than implementation, may be considered at fault in judging the worth of an approach.

6.1.2: Effects of parent participation as decision-makers

Until recently, little was known about the effects of parents as decision-makers on the child, the programs, the parents themselves, and communities.

The sparse findings indicate first that it is difficult to obtain and sustain the involvement of low-income parents, particularly those most deprived and crisis-ridden.[46] If parents are to function in a leadership capacity, they need extensive training and considerable staff support. Training programs for staff and parents now are offered by consulting firms, many of which are minority-owned and staffed with parents who have prominence as community leaders.

Where staff are convinced of the value of parent involvement as decision-makers, where administrators are willing to provide the resources for training, where power to make meaningful decisions is truly devolved, and where planners will wait two or three years for development of effective parent organizations, it seems possible to develop strong decision-making groups. But from reports such as MIDCO (*op. cit.*) and Krulee et al. (*op. cit.*), it appears that these conditions are rarer than program planners have hoped.

On the other hand, surveys over a five year period in Head Start and in Follow Through confirm that parent involvement in decision-making is increasing. The percent of *elected* Head Start Policy Councils in the full year program has risen from 55.5% in 1967 to 77.2% in 1970. More PC's are responsible for hiring staff, budget decision, and approval of program content. Guidelines and manuals on parent participation written for staff and parents have been distributed. In Head Start, over 200,000 copies of the Rainbow Series on parent involvement have been printed. Parent Councils and caucuses have become increasingly direct in stating their positions, as this excerpt from a Parents' Caucus on evaluation of Follow Through indicates.[47]

> "We are tired of others deciding when a program is 'not good' or 'good' for us, based upon their concept of 'data' and their concept of what is 'wrong' with our children, and what is needed to correct those' wrongs'. We will do what we can as a group of anxious and angry parents to keep this program that 'we know is valuable' and we will work to help others that need to know see this. We will not accept, however, as just, their inability to understand as a reason to stop this program for our children. We are also watching the Follow Through family very closely to see who our real allies are, for at times we feel we have been used. We are working toward that power that will make the above a reality...
>
> We will continue to organize other parents throughout the country under any circumstances, Using our statements to Follow Through as a basis, we will make similar demands for parent direction of any new program coming into our communities. We will destroy any program that attempts to experiment upon our children based upon the definition of others. We will insist upon certain practices that do not fit well with strict research ideas...
>
> We are very serious about our opposition to not being included in the first decisions, and if this is to be honored, then immediate steps must be taken. We present this to you humbly because we believe that what is causing our major difficulty is the continued arrogance of those who have continued to behave as if our lives, and the lives of our children, are theirs to manipulate and that we have no rights that they need to respect. We hope, however, that humility is not confused with weakness or lack of conviction about what we resolve." (p. 14-15)

The tenacity of parents' organizations in FCE programs, and the rapid growth of state, regional and national parents' councils suggests that the grass-roots strength of parents as decision-makers can be under-estimated if one looks only at percentages of parents aware of or attending PC meetings.

A second point is that parents, even those who do not actually participate, believe in the influence of parent councils in institutions affecting their children. Table 5 summarizes a variety of indicators of parent involvement in the 1969-70 Follow Through program. Only 40% of the 3,460 parents sampled were PAC members. Of these only 37% ever attended a PAC meeting. Only 13% felt they personally could influence schools. But 93% strongly agreed that the PAC's were effective overall. According to parents, PAC's were most effective in influencing school boards (90% strongly agree), and, in decreasing order, were effective in influencing what children were taught (75%), in hiring teachers (63%) and in determining how school money was spent.

Third, parent involvement as decision-makers does seem associated with institutional change. A national evaluation (the Kirschner study) of community changes benefiting low-income children associated with Project Head Start indicated that the greater the amount of parent participation in the Head Start Center, the more extensively the center was involved in the institutional change process.[48] In addition, the roles of high parent participation centers were the more direct ones of authorizers and executors of change. Finally, the durability and significance of the changes were greater if associated with the influence ofsuch high parent-participation centers. Kirschner study thus (i) confirmed the effectiveness of Head Start as a change agent within communities, and (ii) established that parent participation affects the level of Head Start involvement in change, the function performed in the change process, and the significance of the change on behalf of children.

Table 5: Parent Involvement in Follow-through, 1969-70*

OUTCOMES OUTCOMES	Parent Status (FT)			All FT Parents	NFT Comparison Parents
	Certain Poverty	Possible Poverty	Not Poverty		
	(N=1,436)	(N=856)	(N=1,168)	(N=3,460)	(N=1,696)
1. Awareness					
Awareness of FT	46.5%	55.4%	57.3%	52.3%	--
Awareness of other groups	42.0	46.8	63.4	50.4	41.4
Awareness of PAC	15.9	23.9	20.6	19.7	--
2. Participation					
Any classroom visits	43.4	47.4	56.4	48.8	35.3
3 or more visits	46.5	50.0	53.8	50.2	39.5
Work in classroom	14.3	19.6	24.3	19.0	8.9
If so: as					
Volunteer	73.4	57.8	67.0	66.7	79.2
Pay	26.6	42.2	33.0	33.3	20.8
Private talks	49.6	62.8	75.9	61.8	56.6
Within past month	45.3	45.9	40.3	43.4	34.4
If aware of PAC:					
PAC member	--	--	--	39.6	--
Ever attended a meeting	--	--	--	36.6	--
If so:					
General meeting	--	--	--	51.7	--
Executive meeting	--	--	--	33.9	--
Knows other PAC members	--	--	--	58.5	--

*Stanford Research Institute, Appendix B: Parent Interview Survey. March 1971

	Certain Poverty	Possible Poverty	Not Poverty	All FT	NFT
3. **Sense of influence** (Strongly agree) on schools	10.4%	11.3%	18.5%	13.3%	9.9%
PAC influence					
-with school board	--	--	--	89.8	--
-what children taught	--	--	--	75.5	--
-hiring teachers	--	--	--	62.6	--
-spending school money	--	--	--	61.8	--
Overall PAC effect	91.1	94.3	92.4	92.5	--
4. **Satisfaction with Follow-Through***					
Helpful to child (very)	87.5	85.0	77.7	83.3	--
Child's progress in school (very)	78.7	79.1	74.5	77.4	72.4

*SRI notes, "Although many of the parents made positive comments about the benefits, there were strong hints of dissatisfaction . . . it was hard to ignore parents who complained of feelings of exclusion from the classroom and lack of effective parent-teacher communication. Others felt that control of the program rested with a few active parents and that few attempts had been made to inform and involve parents adequately."

Until recently, there were few data on the effects of parental decision-making on child development. What little there were showed (i) correlations of undifferentiated "involvement" with final levels of child performance and (ii) no effects of parental decision-making on child gains. Stearns and Peterson (op.cit.) summarizing the sparse and unimpressive findings, conclude:

> "The effects of parental decision-making on children's academic performance are particularly difficult to measure and evaluate. First, the change expected in parent attitudes or in school programs as a result of this sort of participation would have longer delayed impacts on the children...Second, decision making roles almost never occur in the absence of change in other roles, so their independent contribution to child outcomes can not be assessed readily... Finally, there is the possibility that, for some groups, if significant decision-making power held, standardized achievement affects would not be measured because parents would gear the program to other outcomes" (p. 27).

In summer 1971, a study of the relationship between (a) parent participation in learner and decision maker roles and (b) child development, program quality, the parents themselves and institutional changes was initiated for Project Head Start. Mounted in anticipation of a policy battle over the role of parents in new guidelines on day care, the study has the deficiencies of post hoc analysis but the advantages of initial random sampling of the univverse of Head Start Centers, stratified random selection following the initial survey, assessment of centers high and low in parents in learner and decision-maker roles, comparisons nested within center stratifications of parents who were active and inactive in learner and decision maker roles; a follow-up sub-study of parents who were high and low in the four role combinations for each center; a sub-study of parents in each center who were paid staff; and measurement of many child variables including self-concept, and many parent outcome variables, as well as program quality and institutional changes.

The project was reviewed from inception to completion by panels including parents, Head Start directors and experts in community involvement, social change theory, parent education and child development. Case histories, interviews, and examination of records for unobtrusive measures were used to obtain qualitative as well as quantitive data.

The deficiencies of the study include (i) inability to infer cause and effect in the associations noted between parent participation and outcome variables since data were collected at one point in time (Spring, 1972); (ii) inability to make inferences about the effect of Head Start on changes in parent participation as a dependent variable, and (iii) absence of comparable data on participation by middle-income parents in center-based programs, and of both low-income and middle income parents in home-based programs.

The national evaluation of Home Start which includes true control groups and is a prospective, longitudinal study, will provide more reliable data on the effects of parent involvement in ECE. The MIDCO study, however, offers reasonably sturdy information. It may, indeed, have the advantage of examining "natural" variations without the intervention programs of Home Start that could bias comparative results in favor of parents as educators.

MIDCO's findings indicate that absolute amount of parent participation is far more important for almost all outcomes than are differences between the forms of participation. According to MIDCO, (i) parent participation in both learner and decision maker roles makes a difference for the parents themselves, for their children, for the program and for the community; (ii) parents who participated extensively, especially those active in decision-making, were more confident of their ability to control their environment and saw themselves as more successful and more skillful; and (iii) parents who were active in the community prior to entry in Head Start were the most enthusiastic participants in Head Start. During their Head Start period, their level of participation in other community activities declined slightly; after Head Start, their activities in other community events rose to still higher levels. (See Figure 4).

MIDCO also found that level of parent involvement is associated with personal self-esteem. Where involvement was lower, self-esteem was lower. Highest parent self-

FIGURE 4: PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN HEAD START (From MIDCO, 1972b)

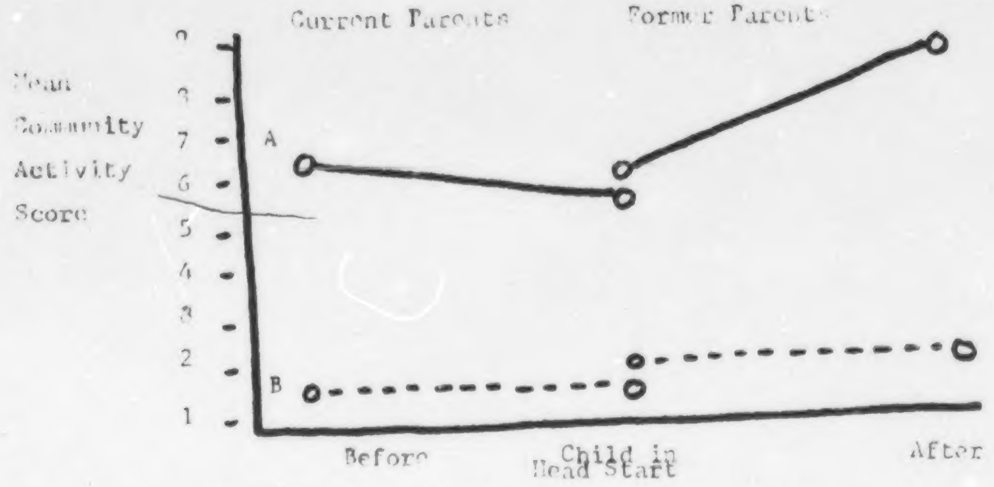

Figure 4A: Community activities outside of Head Start for current and former, and high and low involvement parents (A = High Head Start involvement; B = Low Head Start involvement)

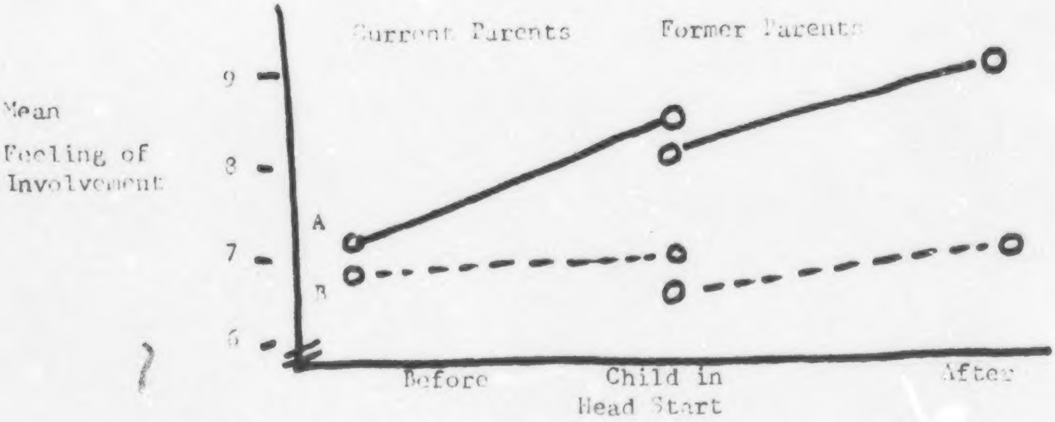

Figure 4B: Feelings about community involvement for current and former, and high and low involvement parents. (A= High Head Start involvement; B = Low Head Start involvement.)

esteem was found in centers which emphasized parental decision-making.

While participation in Head Start seems associated with immediate benefits for parents, MIDCO observed that former parents report reduced self-esteem. "The data do not provide sufficient information to identify cause. One conclusion might be that the high esteem of Head Start parents has a limited time dimension. Another possibility, which is more likely, is that the whole dimension of support for parents is radically lacking in most institutions with which parents must relate after Head Start, especially public schools." (MIDCO, p.46)

6.1.1. With regard to the association of parent participation and child development, MIDCO found:

(i) there is a strong relationship between high participation by parents and better performance on tests of intelligence and task-orientation. The children of parents with extensive participation in both roles produced better scores on measures of verbal intelligence, academic achievement, self-concept, behavioral ratings in classrooms and at home, and change ratings in both learning and participation in activities. High participation is associated with final levels of achievement and with rate of change; the more the better.

(ii) these extend to center influences: children of parents in centers which were classified as high in providing one or both roles scored better on child measures than did children at centers which were classified as low or minimal in both roles. (p.46)

(iii) children of paid employees--like the parents themselves--were similar to children--and parents--of families active as both learners and decision-makers.

6.1.2. With regard to program quality, centers with high participation in both roles were judged as better in quality than centers with low participation. Quality was defined by the Guidelines used in national Head Start program audits; ratings were made by Head Start Center staff, by policy council chairmen and by MIDCO evaluation team leaders. Parent participation, required by Head Start guidelines, thus goes hand-in-hand with other hallmarks of a good ECE program.

6.1.3. With respect to the impact on community institutions, (i) both the greatest number of changes, and more significant changes were found in centers rated high in both decision-making and learner activities. Centers where decision-making was strongest of the two roles, however, showed the most significant kind of institutional change. (The Kirschner Associates criteria of change significance and possible roles in the change process were used in the MIDCO study for comparability across the two evaluations of Head Start's impact on communities.) Also (ii) the extent to which parents from centers participated in all six stages of change was directly related to parent participation. "When parents were high in both roles, there was greater involvement across six stages than when there was little involvement or high participation in only one role." (p. 48)

The parent interviews tell their own story:

o "Once you have been involved in Head Start, you are never the same again. Nine out of ten times, it is enriching and rewarding, even frustrating at times, but you're never the same again, and for the most part, it is a betterment." (MIDCO, 1972b, p. 50)

o "Head Start has been a marvelous experience for me. I am aware of expressing myself. I feel my opinions are valuable to schools in community affairs. I'm more concerned with being informed about things and actively taking part. From the people I've met, I know now where to get information and how and who to see to solve my problems. It has given me a great deal of self-confidence; a desire to be active in things; to voice my opinions; and much gratification for what I have been able to help with. I have only one sad .eeling--that Head Start isn't available to everyone. I hope some day it will be." (p. 51)

6.1.4. Perhaps most important to the policy question with which the study began are the evaluators' conclusions about parent involvement.

"There is little doubt that both the learner and decision-making roles are important positive influences on parents, their Head Start children, the quality of programs and other community institutions. The strongest effect appears to come from a combined effort in both areas. It is the judgment of the evaluators that contrary to arguments cited in the introduction, if the decision-making role is de-emphasized, the learning type of participation will also decline.... We do not believe that Head Start could continue to achieve--certainly not improve--its program quality nor its contribution to parent, child and community change through parent participation without a strong decision-making role." (p. 61)

6.2.: Program implications: Development of parent participation as decision-makers in ECE requires, it appears, considerable determination by sponsoring agencies and a willingness to experience a learning period as professionals and parents learn to work together. As Yin et al. (op.cit.) conclude:

"Certain organizational characteristics can serve to devolve power more effectively than others. In particular, characteristics such as the citizen organization having its own staff, having the power to investigate grievances and to influence substantially the formation and execution of service budgets, haveing an elected citizen membership, and having an umbrella-like organizational structure are associated with the ability of a citizen organization to exert its own influence and control." To this, recent analyses by Stanford Research Institute would add devolving to Parent Councils (with budgets) the task of evaluation experimental programs, of preparing annual progress reports on all school programs, and of purchasing information needed to establish program costs and performance. The rational for these recommendations stems largely from a desire for a fresh look at parents as decision-makers, which includes identification of (i) provision of ways to ajudicate or resolve disputes anticipated between parents and professionals as power devolves. While this recommendation has been made too recently to report on its implementation, the analysis is receiving considerable attention at the Federal level, and is consistent with the role which parent groups repeatedly have claimed as their right and responsibility: to evaluate how well the school their child attends is educating children.

The data suggest that one, in effect, gets what one wants to, and invests resources in. ECE programs seeking to establish parent and citizen influence over activities will need a governing board of members elected as community representatives, must provide the parental decision-making body with a staff and money for parent activities, and must devolve power, including "at least the power to influence substantially the service program's budget and to investigate citizen's complaints."

6.2.1: Providing for parent involvement in forms of ECE other than preschool programs may require considerable diligence:

o Producers of books and multi-media materials may need to include parents on review and development boards and to support consumer verification through parent usage.

o Schools and other organizations offering structured classes in parent education may need to form lay boards including parents. Such boards should have devolved power for real decision-making on content, outreach, focus of service delivery and certification of achievement, and the financial support recommended by Yin et al. to enable their full participation.

o Organizers of parent discussion groups and home visitor programs will need to develop on-going lay advisory and policy making groups composed of parents and other community members.

There may be some merit to a community parents and citizens group, similar to those in Denmark, which reviews all programs for early childhood education developed in a community, including those supported by private funds as well as those involving public money. The costs of such citizens boards for early childhood education could come from public subsidies, from contributions of cooperating organizations and from contributions of cooperating organizations and from fund-raising activities of the boards themselves. For the boards to exercise effective control, some power would have to be devolved for review and approval of public funds or use of public facilities, e.g., approval of television channels for children's broadcast programming.

It may be argued that the benefits of such participation relative to immediate and long-term outcomes are not sufficiently well-established to form the basis for policy recommendations, that "...there is no solid documentation that parental involvement in the schools raises community consciousness, or that it is likely to lead to the kind of school reform talked about so lovingly." (SRI, 1973, p.69) One must agree that the evidence is yet slender. A methodologically oriented review would find more flaws in studies of parents as decision makers than in studies of parents as learners, and an ample number of limitations in these latter studies. Relative to the literature on outcomes affecting children in center-based ECE, data on all parent roles are methodologically weak, and scanty.

On the other hand, parent involvement as a philosophy is consistent with the political system of participatory democracy of many countries. It is also consistent with public policy in the United States regarding education during the school years. The recommendations offered here require further study. More research is needed on how to measure parent participation in decision-making and how to assess its effects on children, programs, institutions and communities. The recent data do, however, indicate a greater value of parent participation in decision-making than had been anticipated from earlier studies and support the wisdom of the equal emphasis on both roles now evident in Federal guidelines.

7.0 Parent participation as paid staff

Parent participation in early childhood education as paid staff has received considerable impetus in the Head Start and other War on Poverty programs. Training neighborhood residents, particularly mothers, makes good sense. Other parents are thought to be more responsive to staff who are neighborhood residents. Parents as staff are believed to bring greater understanding of the child's life to the educational program than could people who have not been part of the child's environment. Communities can resent most of the money for programs going to the salaries of outsiders. Finally, participation as paid staff has direct economic benefits for at least some families, and can provide entry into a career in child care or social services.

The arguments against parent participation as paid staff include (i) the need to find jobs for licensed teachers as primary school enrollments decline; (ii) the belief that professionals *can* understand the child's world and will do a better job than the less trained parents; (iii) the investment required to train and supervise paraprofessionals and (iv) the costs of providing career development programs for parents and other paraprofessionals.

7.1.1. Programs using parents as paid staff:

Many ECE programs have involved parents as paid staff.

Head Start has employed 15,233 parents as paid teacher aides, community outreach workers, social service aides, and nutrition aides. Through the Head Start career development program, about 25,000 parents have completed the high school equivalency examination or enrolled in institutions of higher learning.

Employment of paraprofessionals as parent involvement specialists, community outreach workers and teacher aides has become part of many preschool education programs and part also, of public school practices. Where funds permits, paraprofessionals are employed at all levels, and many are parents. Follow Through and ESEA Title I programs have always employed paraprofessionals, and public schools increasingly are investing state and locally raised funds in hiring parents.

The new Child Development Associates program supported by Project Head Start will establish standards of competence in child care workers and also assist in career development through the coordinated training programs.[49]

> "The Child Development Associates (CDA) is envisioned as a new method of training, assessing and credentialling competent staff persons in early childhood programs. Rather than emphasizing formal academic training, the program focuses on training which will assist child care staff in acquiring competencies needed by persons working with young children. Potential CDAs include Head Start mothers, day care classroom personnel and other persons interested in the education of young children. A CDA consortium with headquarters in Washington has the responsibility of developing CDA assessment and credentialling systems. The Consortium membership consists of a wide range of professional, parent and consumer groups. The Consortium will assess CDA trainees and others in the child care field and will issue credentials to those who can demonstrate CDA competencies. Training is generally expected to last from between six months to two years, depending on the individual's prior experience and skills. At least half the training must be supervised experience in an actual child care center. The CDA system, by certifying competence rather than formal training, may open a true career ladder in ECE for many parents."

Another, and significant trend, is employment of parents in research studies of ECE. Almost all national evaluation studies of early childhood education have employed paraprofessionals as testers, as classroom observers and as parent interviewers. Parents are also being employed as paid consultants in planning ECE programs and evaluation studies. Many experimental ECE programs employ parents as paid staff. Some rotate positions among parents during the year so each parent is employed (and trained) in early childhood education. Others employ the same parents throughout the year, but make room for new parents in the next cycle.

7.1.2. Findings from programs employing parents as staff:

(i) Many reports indicate that parents perform as well in collecting data for research and evaluation studies as do professional and junior personnel. Training and supervision costs are higher, however, and there is no evidence that parents perform better.

(ii) Several experimental studies have compared parents as teachers of other children with the performance of high school students and professionals. Parents are more reliable than high school students. There is considerable evidence that children taught by parents show as much development as parents taught by professionals. The one area in which professionals enhance growth more than properly trained and supervised parents is language development, particularly expressive language and asking causal questions. Data from several national evaluations show an inverse relation between years of teacher education and children's gains during the program. Amount of specific training in early childhood education, however, is positively correlated with child gain. These data suggest that training in early childhood education rather than years of schooling are what distinguishes a good early childhood educator.

(iii) Parent involvement per se rather than being a paid staff member is most strongly associated with child development, better programs, improved family status and institutional change. There were no differences observed in MIDCO head Start evaluation between parents who were highly active as learners or decision makers and those who were paid staff.

7.2.1 Program implications

Parents can be successfully employed as paid staff in early childhood education programs in a variety of duties. Such employment is one way to strengthen the linkage between institutions and the home. There are direct economic benefits to parents. Some parents have continued their development as professionals. No harm to the children is associated with use of carefully selected, properly trained and well-supervised parents as staff members. (There is some evidence, in fact, that greater problems are associated with teachers trained in elementary or secondary education applying these techniques to ECE than from less trained parents.) The costs of training and supervision are higher than for professionals, however, and also program directors may be pressured to employ parents who are not suited for child care. Sometimes parents are selected primarily because they are very poor and need the money, or because they are influential parent board members, rather than for their competence.

Programs employing parents as staff need to be sensitive to the:

(i) need to provide career training, so parents are not exploited in low-paying entry level positions

(ii) need for training and supervision based on the particular strengths and weakness of the parents' backgrounds

(iii) need for more support services for parent aides than for better educated and economically more secure people who are willing to work in child care. Parents are often more vulnerable to crises and will have erratic work histories unless emergency support is provided

(iv) need for objective standards of competence for early childhood education to guide parent selection as child care workers

(v) need to develop a deliberate strategy for employment of parents: is the objective primarily educational for the parents, in which case parent rotation may be supported, or are there other reasons, which require other strategies?

(vi) issue of parent employment in classes where own children are enrolled. Many ECE directors believe this should be avoided as a long-term arrangement.

Parents employed as paid staff in early childhood education programs have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic about what they have learned from the experience. Supervision by skilled, enthusiastic professionals, and participation in the educational components rather than custodial duties are seen as particularly beneficial.

These observations suggest the value of providing opportunities for learning about early childhood education to many parents through a Parents Service Corps. Parents who could not afford to participate as long-term staff members could be subsidized on a sliding scale. Fathers as well as mothers would be encouraged to participate, particularly after the birth of the first child and before subsequent children arrive, so that extensive child care would not have to be provided. A Parents Service Corps could provide personnel for home visitor and other staff-intensive programs (e.g., ECE for handicapped preschool children) and assist parents in learning through supervised experience how to help their own child develop.

8.0.1. Parent involvement and day care: Parents have long been involved in day care. Parent cooperatives have offered released time and shared responsibility. Most of the better day care programs have active parent outreach components. Parents are given menus for the week ahead, and regularly informed about their child's day. Caretakers try to meet individually with parents at home to benefit from the parents' insights and understand the child's home circumstances. Programs receiving Federal support are required to comply with the Federal Interagency Guidelines described earlier.

In recent planning papers and conferences on day care, both parent education and parent decision-making have been called for.

There are few reports on parents' involvement in early childhood education when children are in day care. Bronfenbrenner (op.cit.) believes children may not prosper as much in day care as in early child education programs, in part because of competing demands for parental attention. Most parents have no household help, and must attend to household duties after working hours. Parent participation in evening meetings, or even meetings held during day hours with released time provided by employers is low.

With the increase in working parents and single parent families, more children under six are being cared for outside of their own homes or by persons other than their immediate family. If we believe that parent involvement is the single most important factor in early childhood development, then highest priority in program planning should be devoted to examination of parent-child relationships for children in day care. We need to:

(i) know how working parents differ in their child rearing practices from non-working parents

(ii) assess what working parents need to support their ability to be primary early childhood education agents

(iii) examine strategies that can be developed to meet these needs, such as household help, released time to be with child, and counseling programs to help parents understand the special needs of children in day care and their own feelings.

(iv) develop training and supervision programs for all child care providers that help them define their role, and the ways in which they can supplement education provided by the parents

(v) provide for parental participation in decision-making for child care offered in a variety of settings. The new licensing standards require such participation, but place the burden of arranging for compliance on the day care operator, who may be hard-pressed financially and administratively to provide the support called for by Yin et al. or SRI.

8.0.1 Issues in Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

In this section, issues are briefly highlighted. Many have been discussed in earlier sections. They are presented as concerns which are as yet unresolved.

1. What role do parents want and need in early child hood education? Much program development is based on the notion that parents want to be primary childhood education agents and decision-makers and that many are unprepared for this role or prevented from exercising power. There have no national surveys of parent preferences. Almost nothing is known about what the parents themselves want. Some may prefer to leave education to the schools and focus on other aspects of child rearing. Others may already be highly prepared, with little to learn from parent education programs and with no interest in decision-making. Should parents be forced to participate as decision-makers, if they prefer to rely on educators? Should parenting education be optional (in which case it may increase the disparity between the development of children from more and less

advantaged homes, since such parents often are most eager to learn to be even better) or should there be special outreach to parents who apparently need support?

2. What are barriers and incentives to parent participation in early childhood education? Most studies of parent involvement conclude that parents know little about what is happening in the educational program their child attends, and that access to parents is difficult. Some of this apparent resistance may come from parents who do not want or need involvement in the form offered. For many other parents, however, the apparent apathy may be due to barriers (transportation, child care, more convenient meeting times, information and opportunities more suitable to their needs) which are as yet imperfectly understood.

3. What are the costs of alternate forms of parent involvement? We need more information on the costs of different forms of parent involvement. Neither the direct costs to programs nor indirect costs in foregone earnings have been examined. Available data come from experimental programs, where costs probably are higher than under operational conditions. The total resources needed to deliver parent involvement, how much of these costs could be absorbed through private funds and how much would have to come from public funds are largely unknown.

4. What are the costs of parent involvement relative to other ways of providing early childhood education? Parent involvement has been

sought in the belief that the greater the involvement, the better for the child. What specifically parent involvement contributes to the child's learning has not been adequately distinguished from the contribution of other aspects of the home (genetic, nutritional, health, environmental opportunities, social climate). The cost of increasing involvement through parent education relative to the costs and feasibility of influencing other components of the home, or providing early childhood education in other ways, has not been examined.

5. Do induced changes have the same effects as naturally occurring differences? Almost all the studies of parent involvement in early childhood education are correlational. They show that parents who are more involved as learners, as decision-makers or as staff have children who show greater development than do the children of less involved parents. Studies of parent education with before and after measurement sometimes but not always report changes in parenting behaviors and attitudes toward education. Children show pre and post gains, but no analysis has yet shown a correlation between the induced changes in parents and changes in the child. Both could be due independently to a third influence: the home visitor. We need to learn more about what changes in parents are induced, and if these induced changes have the same long-term effects as naturally occurring differences. For example, parents who use more

elaborative language and who help their children learn through asking questions have children who do better in school than parents without these characteristics. There are parent education programs which can increase these behaviors. Do these induced changes "help" the child to the same extent as the elaborative language of parents who have acquired this characteristic over many years? Do induced changes have the same predictive value as "naturally" occurring variations in parenting behavior and parent self-esteem?

6. How durable are the induced changes and their effects? The durability of changes in parent behavior induced by special programs is uncertain. While early data are encouraging with respect to parents as learners, it is too soon to tell whether parent behavior will return to its original levels without further support, and if children will continue to show good behavioral development. Induced changes in parents as decision-makers are yet to be documented; the MIDCO study suggests that Head Start does not induce active community and program involvement in parents initially low in such behavior. On the other hand, the already active parents became more so during the program and after their children graduated graduated from Head Start.

7. What is necessary and what is sufficient? Consideration of the life circumstances of many parents suggests that there has to be improvement in their lives before they can attend to their involvement

as educators or decision-makers. Other parents may experience institutional pressures orienting them away from the family and from child education. Investment in parent education, in the belief that so doing will turn around an adult-centered society to a child-centered society (or a better balanced one) is likely to be false.

Second, in many instances, objective of parent involvement is improving educational outcomes for low income children. Even with extensive programs for parent education, however, children of low-income families are likely to need other forms of support, including health care, decent nutrition, better children's television programming, better books and educational materials, more attention from varied adults, and at appropriate times, more experience with children their own age, and with mixed age groups.

Third, it is likely that teachers will continue to play an important role in ECE. They are equipped to teach children the basic and academic skills they need, to share an immensely rich and diverse heritage of information, and to foster the development of higher cognitive skills. There may be other ways to accomplish these ends than the schools as we know them now. While other forms are evolving, teachers are needed to guide parents in their roles as educators, and foster the academic skills most parents can not.

These comments are, however, speculative; little systematic analysis has been completed on the mix of services needed in addition to parent education, and how the resources available can be brought to bear on them.

8. Who should educate parents? A distrust of schools has lead early childhood experts to recommend that the schools improve what they are doing already in primary and secondary education. They prefer special agencies such as Offices of Child Development through which consolidated services for children would be organized. Teachers' unions, on the other hand, are lobbying for extension of public education into the preschool period. They rest their case on their professional competence, and the importance of very competent child care workers at the age when children may be most vulnerable to poor education. Of the many issues in parent involvement and early childhood education, the allocation of governance among existing and new professions (and bureaucracies) may be most difficult to resolve.

9. How can continuity between preschool parent involvement and parent involvement after the child enters school be maintained? Administrative responsibility for children is compartmentalized. Children are not. Programs that do not provide a continuity of policy, philosophy and services are likely to do little durable good and may harm children. To date, almost no attention has been given to program continuity in parent involvement. A second priority in planning should be given to ensuring continuity of early childhood education programs for parents and for children.

10. Confrontation and its consequences: Involving parents in decision-making inevitably may create confrontations between those

who hold the power and those who are beginning to seize control. These confrontations can be emotionally charged. Those who hold power can regard parent control as a disaster which prevents good things from happening for children, and withdraw support. Rebuttals are many, including the belief that through applying what we now know about community organizations the benefits of participation can be obtained and at least some of the most harrowing confrontation avoided. How successful such applied social psychology can be is largely untried. We need to learn about parents as decision-makers in countries where this tradition is well-established, and in those countries where it is re-asserting itself or just emerging. Program planners who include guidelines on parents as decision-makers need to be aware of what information does exist. Improved guidelines, and more realistic public expectations may result.

11. Finally, there are methodological issues for program planners who want to study parent involvement in early childhood education. These include ethical concerns for experimental studies with human subjects, problems in designing experimental studies of what may be as difficult to control as parent involvement in decision-making, and the need for improved measures of process and outcome. Stearns and Peterson, MIDCO, Yin et al. and Lazar and Chapman. (op.cit.) all provide analyses of research problems.

9.0 Summary: In summary, five conclusions are reached. (i) There is a trend toward increasing parent involvement in early childhood education in the United States. This trend is based on six factors. First, there is increased demand for participation in all decisions by all sectors of society, including parents' demands for increased control over education. A second influence is the preliminary evidence that parents determine educational outcomes more than do schools as they are presently constituted and hence are appropriately considered a central part of the educational process. Third is increased concern for the first five years of life during which education traditionally has been the responsibility of parents. Fourth is the failure of school-based systems to deliver equality of educational outcomes. Fifth is an increased appreciation for what the schools can learn from parents as resources; and sixth is a rising awareness of the possible need for education for parenting in all sectors of society.

(ii) Parents are involved in ECE as educators, as paid and volunteer staff, as decision makers, and as resources. The trend for increases in all these roles, but particularly the first, is supported by evidence from experimental programs. It is, however, too soon to tell if the effects of programmatically induced parent involvement will be durable and substantial.

(iii) There are many programs now available as models for parent education. There are fewer guidelines on how to develop parent/school partnerships and how to create effective parent decision-making bodies. The available surveys do, however, provide some guidance in all areas.

(iv) Extrapolating from current data encourages expansions of a variety of programs of parent involvement in ECE. Three notes of caution in this extrapolation must be sounded. First parent needs and desires must be better known than at present. Second, differing expectations for parent involvement should be made explicit during planning and ways for resolving possible conflict built into the programmes. Third, such programs must be viewed as part of a more comprehensive strategy for early childhood education. One may expect benefits from parent involvement alone, but not miracles.

(v) At least ten issues central to parent involvement planning need further study and analysis. These are presented as a tentative agenda for future planning, not as roadblocks. As researchers, the unknown draws us on. As planners on behalf of young children, we build new programs. For parent involvement in ECE, now is the time to share experiences among our countries, and to continue what the past decades have so well begun.

FOOTNOTES

1. See ref. 11.

2. See ref. 5.

3. The age considered to be early childhood has been considered to be as brief as 3 to 6 and as long as 0 to 9 years of age. Gordon (personal communication, 1973) notes that the 0 to 9 period was adopted in the recent National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook: Early Childhood Education. The 0 to 6 period is used in this paper as the time when education has been traditionally regarded as private, rather than as a public, responsibility in the United States.

4. See refs. 8,51.

5. See refs. 4,8,62. In reviewing this literature, the reliability of immediate benefits for the children from almost any form of ECE is clear. What often happens is that after the children leave the special ECE program and enter regular public schools, the accelerated rate of growth levels off. The control children who have not attended ECE programs show a growth spurt on school entry and catchup to the preschooled children. Follow-up studies after the second, third and fourth years of public school often, but not always, show a decline in the growth rate and absolute levels of achievement of both groups of children, when the children are from low-income families. For middle-income families, there typically are no discernible advantages of preschool when children are observed after several years of regular school, but no losses. If the criterion of an educational intervention is durability of effect, it is likely that few fairly short interventions will be effective. To some researchers, this implies the need for continuous well-planned educational programs, and more money for ECE. To other researchers, the findings suggest that the "real" difference is between no education and some education, and that variations in educational treatments have negligible effects relative to home and other influences. They recommend choosing the least expensive educational program, since variations between more and less costly programs have yet to be shown to make a substantial, durable differences in educational outcomes.

   Almost all researchers agree that the data associated with these conclusions are methodologically weak, limited by severe inadequacies in experimental designs and in measures. Despite the consternation of those who believe a great deal more money is needed to make existing schools educationally desirable places for children, the effect of the generally negative evaluations of special programs has been that little new money has been voted for schools. The emphasis is rather on institutional changes that re-allocate existing resources, for both ECE and for schools from K to 12th grade.

6. See ref. 26.

7. See refs. 10,17. There are millions of 0 to 6 year old children in day care and millions more who need after-school care. Apparently, only children of affluent families who can choose among early childhood education programs and make their own arrangements, begin to be protected from neglect and abuse.

8. See refs. 4,8,49,52,62.

9. This "conclusion" is most controversial in two respects. First, it is likely that most day care facilities would not pass inspection. Unless there were funds and technical assistance to bring these facilities up to minimum standards, the next result could be closing the already scarce, though marginally acceptable, day care facilities creating a black market of even worse situations, or leaving thousands of heads of households without any child care assistance. Second, many early childhood educators argue that developmental day care is justified and essential; the weight of evidence from policy analyses, however, leans in the other direction. The critical issue seems to be whether one begins with minimum standards of quality for all children in day care, and improves these, which is deemed by some policy analysts to be financially viable, or if legislation should not settle for less than the best for children, and the nation faced with the fact that developmental care, or comprehensive care, costs a lot.

10. The notion of early identification of children with special educational needs raises considerable alarm in some quarters. These educators believe early "labelling" of children can do more harm than good, particularly if facilities for follow-up treatment were not available. Accurate diagnosis of early developmental problems, without the abuses of discrimination and inaccurately assigning children to programs for the educationally retarded, is receiving attention from a national commission on diagnostic testing.

11. Again, parent education programs are recommended by many scholars, but repudiated by others as racist. See refs. 3,35 for this latter position.

12. See refs. 53,63.

13. Follow Through is a federally supported program for children from low-income families in K, 1, 2, and 3rd grades. The program was conceived originally as an upward extension of Project Head Start, and has the features of the comprehensive Head Start program: parent involvement, health and nutritional programs, community involvement, social services, and special educational programs. In Follow Through, the educational programs are provided by "sponsors" each of whom have their own approach to educational goals and methods. (See ref. 53 for a description of each of the sponsor's programs.) In preparation for this paper, a letter requesting information on the goals, objectives, and outcomes related to parent involvement was sent to all Follow Through sponsors. Most graciously responded with copies of their curriculum guides and statements of philosophy; only two had any data on the effects of the parent involvement programs. In almost all statements, the theme of parent/school interrelationships was dominant; particular emphasis was placed on increasing the awareness of professional educators of parents as resources from whom the teachers could learn.

14. Information in this section is based on the following references: 2,5, 6,7,14,15,20,23,29,35,48,50,53,63. Some of these references include bibliographies of several hundred items, giving an indication of the size of the literature on parent and community involvement in education.

15. See refs. 3,36, for an eloquent statement of the issues in who controls day care and ECE programs from the point of view of advocates of community control.

16. See ref. 35.

17. See ref. 38.

18. See ref. 16.

19. International commissions, and re-analyses of data from United States schools show that variations between schools in presumed indicators of educational quality, such as per pupil costs, predict relatively little variance in average differences in academic outcomes between schools. Relatively, variations in average social class or ethnicity between schools predict more variance in average pupil outcomes. This is widely interpreted to mean that the home is more important than the school in affecting educational outcomes. This may be true, but the available data are only weak evidence, albeit consistent with the hypothesis. First, in the data used, variations in school quality were more limited than variations in social class. Second, the absolute upper levels of variations in school quality are considerably below what many educators consider desirable, although the lower levels

of variations encompass some lamentably poor teaching situations. Third, the indicators of school quality have been challenged as insensitive, and fourth, the indicators of educational outcome have been questioned. There are in additional methodological criticisms about sampling, analytic techniques, and the like. It seems developmentally logical that family background, which would be relatively stable for a given child and include genetic, constitutional, and economic factors as well as educational influences, would account for considerable variation in differences among children. In the other hand, if one of the national educational goals is to reduce this correlation, that is, to equalize the learning opportunities for children from the economically more disadvantaged families, then it may be premature to conclude school variations could not have a major effect. Experimental designs including long-term, large variations in school quality, with outcome measures including children's enjoyment of education, sense of competence, and academic measures, would seem indicated.

20. See ref.

21. See refs. 23,29,35,43, for further information and references to most of the programs discussed.

22. See ref. 42.

23. See refs. 14,15,56.

24. Such benefits in parent attitudes are reported by other Follow Through sponsors. See refs. 1,45. In a Head Start experimental program involving 8 of the Follow Through sponsors, early data indicated relatively greater changes in parent attitudes for the Gordon program than for those which were less parent-oriented.

25. See ref. 4.

26. See ref. 55.

27. See ref. 28,29,35,53.

28. See refs. 12,37. Spread of benefits from the focal child to other children is among the most interesting and least studied effects of parent education. Many reports do not include any data on siblings. The most extensive information on sibling effects comes from the earliest program, and one which is a mixed model for 3 to 5 year-olds. Routine collection of data on siblings, and secondary analyses of the existing data banks for spread of effects would seem eminently worthwhile.

29. About $800 per year per child is spent on primary school education and is, in some ways, the upper limit of replicable costs for public investment in ECE. The true operational costs per year per child (or family) are difficult to estimate in ECE programs. There are no generally established guidelines for separating program start-up, design and development, research and evaluation costs from operational costs. Only recently have standardized functional cost-accounting systems for day care been available. Many day care centers rely on volunteers and other indirect cost services and goods. Estimating the true operational costs across centers which rely almost entirely on such donations and those relying almost entirely on cash income has improved, but is still imperfect. Based on the Head Start and demonstration program experience, about $2,300 per year per child seems required for center-based comprehensive care for 3 to 5 year olds. Costs rise for infants, whose care requires more adults per child. The home visitor programs save costs of maintaining centers, but are more expensive in travel time and expenses.

The true cost for a family participating for three years in the federally supported experimental program for children from 0 to 3, the Parent-Child Center program, may be close to $8,000. Regardless of benefits/cost ratios, this is probably beyond replicable levels for a nation-wide program. Hence the concern for identifying those children who really need comprehensive services, and for alternate delivery systems which could provide partial services at lower costs for children whose needs are more limited.

30. Bronfenbrenner (op. cit.) analyses a series of experiments by Karnes. Karnes and her co-workers found that parent education programs alone were very good, and so were center-based programs. The combination, however, led to lower gains for the children than either program alone. Karnes speculates, "These (program) changes, which seemed relatively minor at the time, coupled with the child's preschool attendance, may have significantly altered the mother's perceptions of her role in this program. In the short-term study, the mother was aware that she was the only active agent for change in her child, and as she became convinced of the merit of the program she increasingly felt this responsibility.... In the longer study, mothers appreciated the value of activities for their children but may have over-emphasized the role of the preschool in achieving the goals of the program." Bronfenbrenner concludes, "The psychological development of the young child is enhanced through his involvement in progressively more complex enduring patterns of reciprocal, contingent interaction with whom he has established a mutual and enduring emotional relationship...any force or circumstance which interferes with the formation, maintenance, status or continuing development of the parent-child system in turn jeopardizes the development of the child." (op. cit.)

31. See refs. 18,31,32,33.

32. Little is known about the distribution of parenting skills by ethnicity, race or social class. Provision of intensive parenting education on the basis of established, rather than ascribed, need seems on the face of it a sounder policy than assuming most poor parents lack child-rearing skills.

    Problems of measuring the need for parent education without invading privacy or incurring higher costs for assessment than those required for service delivery may reduce the value of this strategy, however. Low-cost, effective programs voluntarily available for all parents (and parents-to-be) thus are being sought.

    The case for not equating "poor" with "bad" in early childhood education is well-represented by Nimnicht et al., op. cit. Chapter II ("A More Productive Approach to Education than 'Compensatory Education' and 'Intervention Strategies'"). The concept of enhancing the family's ability to attend (ATA) and the school's ability to respond (ATR) are introduced. ATA is dependent on prenatal health care, health care for the child, food, living environment, environment surrounding the living environment, number of adults to attend, number and spacing of siblings and the presence of physical or mental illness. As noted, none of the determinants of ATA is considered to be lack of information on early childhood education practices.

    Following this logic, support for comprehensive services (health, nutrition, housing, neighborhood environment, etc.) are priority needs for low-income, multi-problem families. Some demonstration programs are providing allied services to such families, but their costs and effectiveness are as yet unknown. The experimental Head Start Child and Family Resource Programs which just have been launched under the direction of Dr. Ruth Ann O'Keefe of the U.S. Office of Child Development, offer the services called for by Nimnicht et al., in addition to parent and child education. Service will be continuous, prescriptive and individualized, based on the family's and child's needs. Children from 0 through 7 can be served through the centers.

33. See ref. 64.

34. See ref. 48.

35. See ref. 47.

36. See ref. 41.

37. See ref. 29.

38. See ref. 29,61.

39. See ref. 52.

40. Parent/Teacher or Parent/Teacher/Student Associations are voluntary organizations which provide a forum for discussion of mutual concerns among parents, schools and students. These organizations, supported by dues of individual members, have long been one channel of communication between homes and schools. The organization has no direct control over educational decisions; it operates by increasing mutual understanding and through persuasion. How effectively it operates is uncertain; many PTAs have reported effectively improving the school, and the home/school relationship. Others are reported to be poorly attended, mildly social groups. See refs. 39,48.

41. See refs. 13,30.

42. For information on ESEA, see refs. 8,44,45.

43. See ref. 10. Very recently, the Office of Child Development has issued guidelines for licensing day care centers, which include even more detailed, but similar requirements for parent involvement in decision-making. See ref. 17.

44. See ref.

45. MIDCO (op. cit.) write: In the 1965 Head Start planning memorandum, parents were conceived in the learner role--as adjuncts to the program, not as central to it. In 1967, the first official Manual reiterated the importance of parents as learners, but listed as first among equal "...participation in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program."

    Finally, in 1970, Head Start issued new guidance on parent instruction (Instruction I-30, Section B-2, dated 8/10/70). Once more the major objective for parent participation in Head Start was stated as providing an opportunity for parents to influence the program. The assumption is made that only by meeting this objective will the child development program become maximally effective and therefore allow the ultimate objective for children (reaching their fullest potential) to materialize.

    The third statement is probably most crucial for all since it provides the most comprehensive rationale for defining parent participation in Head Start.

46. Stearns and Peterson write, "ESEA Title I. Although the Title I guidelines permit and encourage all kinds of parent involvement, little attention is given to effecting specific improvements in the direct interaction between parent and child. Rather, the focus is on increasing the effectiveness with which parents can influence decisions made by local school officials. Title I regulations have provided formal means for decision-making participation by parents.

"Examination of Title I's history shows that the commitment to, and mechanisms for, parent participation have only emerged slowly and have undergone frequent changes since ESEA was authorized in 1965. Federal officials began urging Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to involve parents and other interested community members soon after enactment of the original legislation, but there were no formal requirements for parent involvement. A document issued in 1968 (Program Guide No. 46) recommended establishment of local advisory councils. Public Law 91-230, passed in 1970, empowered the U.S. Commissioner of Education to require LEAs to involve parents in federally financed programs if such involvement appeared beneficial. A year later, in October 1971, Title I guidelines were amended to require establishment of parent councils for local projects. These councils, on which parents were to constitute more than a simple majority, were to participate in the planning, development, operation and evaluation of the projects.

"Title I publications have emphasized that these councils (PACs) should be "a structured, organized means of involving parents" in Title I projects (Parental Involvement in Title I, ESEA, 1972, p. 5). Organizing parents into formally structured and officially sanctioned groups increases the likelihood that they will not be co-opted into into the Placation Role or the Sanctions Role. Emphasis by program staff on the need to provide training for PAC members and other parents indicate that Federal Office of Education (OE) personnel envision the Information Role as the ideal one for PACs to fill. However, the guidelines do not specify the kinds of decisions in which councils are to be involved or the ways in which they can actually influence decisions.

"As a result, the expectations held by parents and local staff members vary from school to school and district to district. At present, many Title I PACs want to act in a Checks and Balances Role (similar to their perception of Follow Through PACs). Strong positions are generally supported by OE administrators. The impact of parents on decisions would, they feel, be strengthened if funds were available to train parent groups in the complexities of Title I legislation and regulations, and if more PACs were elected from among Title I parents rather than appointed by school boards. However, there is currently no formal provision for such activities, and local PACs are left to assume roles principally through their own determination, depending on the amount of cooperation of local school and project officials.

"Title I generally assumes a School-as-Failure model. Guidelines for the program do not reflect the Deficit model's assumption that the responsibility for poor achievement lies with the child and his home environment. Rather, they assume that the job of diagnosing the problem and effecting the cure cannot be successfully undertaken by professionals alone. It is unfortunate that conflicting expectations have sometimes had the effect of polarizing district professionals and Title I parents until the professionals assume a Deficit model, while the parents assume a Social Structure Change model, with the result that little cooperation is possible.

"'Follow Through' In Follow Through, parent involvement again takes at least as great a variety of forms as in Title I, depending in additional upon the participating sponsor or model that is chosen for a school. However, regardless of the model chose, Follow Through guidelines call for parent involvement in all the roles described earlier, focusing on the involvement of parents in established Parent Advisory Committees. What sets Follow Through apart from Title I in this respect is not chiefly the ways in which parents have been encouraged to participate, but rather the rationale behind this participation.

"Authorized under the community action title of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act, Follow Through was originally conceived as a comprehensive attack on poverty in which the school would serve as a focal point for coordination of services to the low-income community. 'Maximum feasible participation' was to be encouraged not only as a way to optimize immediate impacts on the children but also as a way of permitting adults in the poverty community to change the social context in which the children were educated. Follow Through (as well as Head Start and other EOA-authorized activities) stems from a Social Structural Change Model, and is oriented toward changing local institutions and the power and status of the parents and thus their children.

"A fundamental tenet of Follow Through, expressed in the Guidelines, is that 'parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in determining the nature of their children's education.' (Follow Through Program Guidelines, 1969, p. 5). PACs are expected to participate in preparing annual project applications and to help select staff and materials. The project staff bears the major responsiblity for the conduct of local projects, but guidelines require that the PACs approve decisions made about local projects and approve proposals for additional funding. In sum, the Follow Through Guidelines and the tenor of OE administrative actions place PACs in the roles of Checks and Balances, or of Change Agents.

"Shortly after its inception, the Follow Through program underwent a major shift to become an experimental program administered by the Office of Education. This relocation signalled heavier emphasis on academic achievement and educational services provided by the school, with less attention given to 'comprehensive services' or impacts on parents, community or institutions. EOA remains the authorizing legislation, and the program staff at OE continues to encourage the program's original intent and support of parent involvement in significant roles. However, this shift of administrative agency naturally tends to de-emphasize somewhat the 'Change Agent Role', placing greater stress on the value of parents in an Informational Role, closer to what appears to be the 'ideal' for Title I."

47. See ref. 28.

48. See ref. 29,53, for a review of this evidence, and ref. 36 for a refutation that low participation is "characteristic" of low-income families.

49. See ref. 58.

50. See ref. 27.

51. See ref. 6.

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